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COMPANION

TO

THE FONT AND THE PULPIT,

BY

THE RIGHT REV. WILLIAM MEADE, D. D.

BISHOP OF THE P. E. CHURCH OF VIRGINIA.



WASHINGTON:

J. AND G. S. GIDEON, PRINTERS.

1846.

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The proceeds of this work are for the use of the Society  
for the education of pious young men for the ministry of  
the Protestant Episcopal Church.

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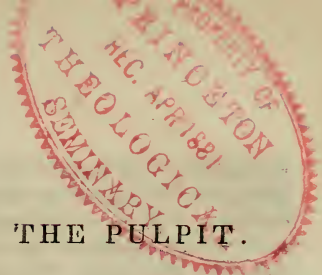
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## PREFACE.

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Some apology is due for the great imperfections of style, and the needless repetitions sometimes occurring in the following treatise. That apology is to be found in the feeble health of the writer and the brief time allowed for the execution of the task. He was unable even to copy his first draught of it with a view to improvement and condensation. For the correctness of the views presented, and the documents adduced, he does not plead any apology, as they have been well considered and examined. The tract has assumed far more of the argumentative, and even controversial form, than the author desired, and has been extended much beyond his original design. The circumstances of the times seemed to render this necessary. Should life be spared, and ability granted, the author may see fit, at some future period, to reduce the treatise on baptism to a much smaller form, giving it a more practical and devotional character, for the use of parents and sponsors.





# THE FONT AND THE PULPIT.

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## CHAPTER I.

The following treatise has been designed, and even promised by its author, for some years, and its execution only prevented by duties which left no leisure for it. Amongst the departments of the pastoral office, none have been more deeply interesting to him, during a ministry of no short duration, than the performance of baptism, especially where children were the subjects. Never has he felt himself to be more the minister of Christ, than when taking little children in his arms, and in compliance, as he verily believes, with the will of God, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He has felt himself called upon, oftentimes, both in private and public, to take great pains, and use many words, in endeavoring to present what he deemed correct views of the ordinance, and to impress the minds of all present at its performance, with a deep conviction of its important bearing on the interests of true religion. This was especially called for at the time of the first efforts to resuscitate the church of Virginia, by reason of the contempt and neglect into which the ordinance had fallen, through its lamentable profanation. With many it was the mere giving of a name to the child by an authorized minister, just as persons were given in marriage by the same. Both of these ceremonies were often performed at the same time and place, not, however, the time and place of prayer, but amidst scenes of levity and dissipation, illy according with an ordinance of Heaven for the religious benefit of a poor child of sin and death. The sponsors, also, who were called in to the aid of parents in the performance of their most solemn trust, were frequently the most light-minded of the company, who had, perhaps, never spent a serious thought on their own baptismal vows, or been even

reminded of the same. It is not to be wondered at, that an institution, so abused as this was, should not only sink into contempt with some, but even cease to be observed by many, unto whom plausible arguments against its very use were earnestly addressed. To the later ministers of the Episcopal church in Virginia, there has, in this respect, been left a sad inheritance by their predecessors in office. Through the blessing of God, however, they have succeeded in effecting a great change in the sentiments and conduct of the members of the church. But few of the children now born within the pale of our communion are ever withheld from this gracious privilege; though it is to be feared that here, as elsewhere, many are brought to it without those earnest desires, those just views, and that assured confidence of God's blessing, which ought to be in the hearts of all who present them.

The author has long thought that a simple treatise, having for its title that placed at the head of this, and for its object the better preparation of parents and sponsors for the pious performance of their part in the solemn transaction, might be prepared somewhat after the manner of treatises for the communion, not merely setting forth right views of the ordinance, and removing prejudices, but containing some meditations, or prayers, to be used before and after the solemn service. If a man should always examine himself before he presume to partake of the Lord's Supper, lest he should do it unworthily; if he should prepare himself for days beforehand, that he may come piously and joyously to that feast which is so often spread before him; surely, in relation to this solemn act, to be performed but once, there ought to be some especial previous consideration on the part of those permitted to present their children to the Lord in baptism. It may be, that a want of due preparation and proper qualifications on the part of those presenting, may not a little hinder the future efficacy of this sacrament. On the part of adults receiving it, previous fasting and prayer are enjoined by the Church, in order to their better observance of it; and as those who bring children to it are required to make such solemn promises in their name, and at the close of the service are so earnestly enjoined to perform a faithful part in training the baptized ones for Heaven, it is plain that they should

not only be sincerely pious themselves, but that their piety should be put into active exercise on this occasion, seeing that the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth so much. As circumcision may become uncircumcision, so baptism may prove a mere form, unproductive of any particular benefit to the recipient, through the future abuse of its privileges; and who can tell how much the neglect of those to whom the children are entrusted may contribute to this, and how far this neglect may have been promoted by the want of right views and feelings at the time of the presentment. In order to the faithful performance of our part in this transaction, it is important that we come to it in no doubtful state of mind, but verily persuaded that God favorably alloweth this charitable work, and that a blessing belongs to it if done according to his will. It is very desirable that we have a just view of those scriptures which speak of it, that we may know what is promised, and ask the same in faith, nothing wavering. Nor only this, but we should also duly understand what are the views of the Church, as set forth in her articles and services, that we may use the same heartily and approvingly. It is very certain that different meanings have been and are ascribed to those scriptures, and those words of the Church, which bear on this subject; nor is it to be expected that there should be a perfect agreement here, seeing that, in all ages, there has been such diversity of sentiment on other parts of Divine truth. Nevertheless, it is very desirable to arrive at the highest attainable degree of unity, and of course it is right to seek after the same by all proper means.

Amongst the considerations leading to the present effort, though not suggesting it in the first instance, there may be stated the fact, that the design and efficacy of baptism, especially as regards children, has, within the last few years, been the subject of much discussion, during which the language and doctrine of the Church has been brought under more critical examination. In consequence of this some minds, hitherto not very attentive to the subject, have been not a little perplexed by the variety of sentiment existing even amongst those who, from their office and studies, ought to be able to declare the true meaning of the Church. The old

charge of Romanism has also been revived, on the ground of some strong expressions in our baptismal services, which seem to savor of the doctrines of that corrupt church. The effect has been to awaken, in some minds, an apprehension that there was still something of the old leaven of falsehood permitted to remain in this part of our prayer-book. It appears to some that if certain expressions, introduced into our baptismal services, are to be understood in their commonly received acceptation, then too much is ascribed to this one ordinance—that God is made to concentrate almost all his spiritual gifts around this one ordinance—that he has even debarred himself from any communication of the Spirit, whether to adults or infants, until the very moment and act of baptism—that, before this, the subjects are only objects of his displeasure, the children of wrath, who cannot see the kingdom of Heaven; but that immediately after, and by the very act, they become new beings, their natures being changed, themselves being henceforth children of grace and heirs of glory. In confirmation of this it is alleged, that while the Episcopal Church, in several places, most emphatically declares her belief, that all baptized children dying in infancy, and all adults who believe and are baptized, shall certainly be saved, she nowhere as expressly says, that any can be saved without baptism. From hence it is inferred, that she at least so far doubts the fact that she dares not assert a belief or hope of it. Such, say some whose minds are uneasy on the subject, and others who raise this as an objection to our Church, derive support from the fact, that, in the writings of some of her divines, it is positively affirmed that such are her real views, drawn from the scriptures as interpreted by the early church. Within the last few years, especially, there have appeared those who maintain that our standards, if honestly interpreted, must speak sentiments on the subject of baptismal regeneration and justification, which to many of us appear most extravagant, and unsupported either by scripture, reason, or experience. On these accounts some persons, not satisfied to observe the mere formality of baptism, in relation either to themselves or children, are unable to approach it in that state of mind which is so much to be desired when about to perform a religious act, and publicly



to invoke the blessing of Heaven. It is the humble hope of the writer to say some things, which may not only aid the pious in obtaining a devout frame of mind, but in some measure remove uncomfortable doubts as to the meaning of certain words used in our impressive offices for baptism.

It may be as well at once to remark, before entering on this subject, that the Scriptures themselves, written as they were at sundry times and divers manners, and on various subjects, though all tending one way, are in some places hard to be understood, and difficult to be reconciled with each other, though doubtless there is a perfect harmony throughout. By a careful and candid comparison of the different parts, comparing scripture with scripture, very much of this apparent difference is removed; though, after all, some learned and pious persons differ not a little as to the precise meaning of some passages. Is it then to be wondered at, that the Church, in drawing up her services for the administration of a divine ordinance, so emphatically enjoined of God, and spoken of by the inspired writers in such strong terms of commendation, and doing it in words whose meaning is always liable to vary somewhat in the minds of men from the lapse of time and the changes of language, and desiring to use as much as possible of the language of scripture, and yet express herself in the fewest words which would answer—is it, I say, to be wondered at, that in attempting this, she should not entirely succeed in conveying to the minds of all her members and ministers, in all time to come, perfectly clear and satisfactory views of the meaning of all the terms she uses, especially when we know that they cannot always agree as to the meaning of those very Scriptures which she has interwoven with her services? The very brevity which she must necessarily seek in services so frequently and publicly to be used, rendered it almost impossible to meet the demands of some as to clearness and explicitness of doctrine. Nevertheless, it becomes us, in a sincere desire for truth, to examine the words of Scripture and the Church; and when we cannot see, as it were, face to face, be content to see through a glass darkly, and not be ashamed to acknowledge that there are some things too high for us, and some things so secret, that God only can see into

them. But while we must admit that there is a difficulty in ascertaining, to our perfect satisfaction, what is the precise meaning of certain expressions, whether in the Scriptures or the services of the Church, it is pleasing to be able to say, positively, that some things which are imputed to them are not to be found there, because we can show that they are plainly contradicted by other places, about which there can be no dispute. One principle then is clearly set forth in Scripture, and most faithfully copied into our prayer book, which I would present to the minds of my readers, as opposed to undue and extravagant views of baptism, or of any positive ordinance, such as are sometimes taken of them—I mean the distinction so clearly made by God himself between certain things belonging to his Kingdom—some things being more important than others, though all must needs be important, else God would not have ordained them. There are those who speak as if it were most presumptuous and criminal in man to make any such distinctions or comparisons, or to affirm that any of God's institutions might be dispensed with, for any cause whatever, without imminent danger to the soul, if not certain loss of it. It is most true, that man must not dare to make exceptions, and to dispense with any of the divine appointments; but when God gives us clear intimations of his preference of one over another, and does actually, for certain reasons, dispense with some and not with others—who are we, that we should refuse to allow and thankfully receive the distinction? We do not honor, but dishonor God, when we refuse to follow where he leads the way, and maintain exceptions which himself has made. Much has our holy religion been misrepresented and dishonored by departing from this principle, and hesitating to admit into our systems exceptions which God himself has established in the government of his Church, and the bestowment of his grace. Now, God has most clearly distinguished between positive institutions and moral principles, declaring that mercy is better than sacrifice; that there are some matters of the law weightier than others, though none must be neglected, not even the least, without due cause. In answer to the Scribe, who asked, which was the greatest commandment, our Lord, instead of rebuking him for an im-



proper question, readily answered; establishing the principle of an essential difference, and declaring that love was the very soul of all the commandments. On the same principle we are told, that "without holiness, no man can see the Lord;" and that "without faith, it is impossible to please God!" But is it thus that God speaks of outward ordinances? Does he assure us that the omission of them, no matter for what cause, is absolutely fatal to the soul? Have his own dealings with the Church sanctioned such a supposition? Let us see whether, in regard to the two initiatory ordinances, circumcision and baptism, we have a right to draw such a conclusion.

In a most special manner, God appointed circumcision as a token of the covenant with Abraham and his posterity, commanding young and old to observe it, and saying, that whosoever was not circumcised had broken the covenant, and must be cut off from Israel. As to the extent of that penalty, how far it deprived them of Jewish privileges—when it was due to the young Israelite, whose parents or master neglected, and who continued to neglect it himself—as to its supposed bearing on the future condition of the soul, the Jewish Rabbis, in the absence of all clear declarations from God, expressed their own opinions, but differed not a little; though, as we shall see hereafter, some rules were adopted on the subject, in the way of church discipline. We must necessarily suppose that the heavy displeasure of God was incurred by those who unnecessarily neglected it; and that the Jew, who through life wilfully despised this ordinance of God, had nothing to hope from him in another world. But that it was, under all circumstances, absolutely necessary, in order to any connexion with the people of God, or the covenant with God, or to salvation hereafter, how can we believe, when for forty years in the wilderness, during a period when they were so peculiarly the people of God, as to his protecting providence, it was permitted to be laid aside. Must there not have been, during the continuance of the Jewish dispensation, thousands of instances in which children, prevented by necessity from being thus entered into the Jewish Church on the eighth day, died before it could be done; and who can bring himself to believe that such were lost for-

ever? Who can believe that the thousands of infants, destroyed at their very birth by the command of Pharaoh, to keep down the increasing numbers of the people of God; or the little innocents whom Herod destroyed, in order to ensure the death of the Babe of Bethlehem, none of whom were circumcised, must therefore be numbered among the lost ones? It is true that we hear of some, in the days of the Apostles, saying, "Except ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved;" but they were not the words of God, or of his inspired penmen. God's word ever lays the emphasis on the circumcision of the heart, without which nothing else could avail. As to baptism, when our Lord appeared upon earth, establishing his kingdom, or rather continuing and enlarging that which he already had, he substituted it for circumcision, enjoining the observance, with expressions of great strength—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Such words appear to be absolute, and it may be asked, how can any unbaptized person hope for Heaven, seeing that no exception is made; but that faith and baptism, being born of water and the Spirit, are coupled together on seemingly equal terms, and both required. Who shall undertake to separate them, and in any one instance dispense with either? Certainly none but he who gave the law, and joined them together. But if he does ever make a difference, and separate them, who are we that we should forbid, and say it is impossible? The guilt of presumption is with him who doubts and refuses to acknowledge most cheerfully whatever God seems plainly to intimate. Now, it is evident, that in many places of Scripture they are spoken of separately. Faith, and the being born of the Spirit, are repeatedly declared to be effectual to salvation, without any mention, at the time, of baptism with water; whereas baptism with water is never spoken of as sufficient or effectual, without being connected with the word, or Spirit, or faith, or repentance. This surely could not have been an oversight in the sacred writers, but must have been designed by the Holy Ghost. What would have been the effect of a single instance of salvation even seeming to be ascribed to baptism, without the addition of faith and repen-

tance, seeing that such undue power is ascribed to it, even now made dependent as it is for its efficacy in the hands of God on those things which are connected with it? One of the sacred writers (St. Peter) seems, as it were, on the point of making the mistake, when he says: "The like figure whereunto baptism even now saves us;" but he immediately adds, "not the working away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God," lest he should be misunderstood. If any demand some act or declaration, on the part of our Lord, shewing that this is the right construction to be put on the language of Scripture, that can be afforded. I know not who, of all the sinners of this earth, had better assurance of salvation, than he to whom our Lord, in his last agony, said: "This night shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" and yet he had neither been baptized, nor had he partaken of the Lord's Supper, having only faith and repentance.

That baptism is not so essential to salvation but that there may be exceptions, has ever been the general sentiment of the Christian Church. There were, it is true, in some of the earlier and in some of the darker ages, those who doubted it, and those who denied it; but one of the most thorough enquirers into the sentiments of the primitive christians—the learned Bingham—informs us, that when in the third and fourth centuries some began to speak in such doubtful terms of the possibility of salvation to the unbaptized child, it was often done in order to induce parents to bring their children to baptism; some being backward in doing it. It was generally agreed that martyrs, executed before they could be baptized, and infants who could not receive it, though through no fault of their own, would be saved without it; and that only the wilful contempt of it by the adult would be visited with the Divine displeasure, and exclusion from Heaven. Such may truly be said of our own Church, and of all the churches of the Reformation. In protesting against many of the doctrines of the Romish Church, they did not fail to let it be known, that they sympathized not with her in the cruel belief that the want of baptism was the loss of Heaven to the babe of yesterday, who dies in its mother's arms, unable to ask for, or even think of,

the needed grace. If it be asked, why our Church does not more expressly, and at the very time of baptism, make the exceptions, and protest against the hateful doctrine, we answer, that in this, as in other things, she has carefully copied after God's word. First, she solemnly sets forth the command of Christ; then the sure promise to those who believe and are baptized; then she is careful, after the example of scripture, to set forth, in various places, the promises to faith and repentance, the new birth by the word and Spirit, without any allusion to baptism; and then, lest this should not suffice, as our Lord in his last agony made an exception, she honors the principle; for, in her catechism, she says, as to both the sacraments, that they are only "*generally necessary to salvation*," allowing for exceptions, though it was not her part to specify them. In the baptism of adults she is more express, for immediately after quoting those very words of our Lord, which some think forbid us to make an exception—after declaring that, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven—she immediately adds, as a comment on the words, "Whereby ye may perceive the great necessity of this sacrament, where it may be had." As to the Lord's Supper, also, in the same spirit, she says, that when prevented by sickness from receiving the appointed memorials from the hands of a minister, the pious believer may without them, by the exercise of a true faith, partake of the body and blood of Christ, in the only way in which the Church understands that participation—that is, after a heavenly and spiritual manner. In like manner, as to baptism, she holds that those who have been born again of the word and Spirit, and have come to true faith and penitence—thus dying—will, according to God's promise to true believers, be saved, although they may have been prevented from Christian baptism. Nor shall we go beyond numbers of the most learned, pious, and devoted sons and ministers of the Church, (although it was not to be expected that she herself should undertake formally to make such exceptions,) in expressing our conviction that there have been, at different periods in the Christian Church, some pious but mistaken persons, who have so misunderstood the design of our Lord as to suppose



that the only baptism required was the baptism of the Spirit, and have therefore sought and received only that. This conviction having been carefully instilled into the minds of their children, they have grown up among Christians in the firm belief that it was unnecessary, and have neglected this seal of Heaven. Thus obeying their earthly parents, they have thought that they were also honoring their heavenly one. Who among us can question the piety and salvation of numbers in the society of Friends, who were never baptized with water? Although we must at the same time not only deeply lament, but most strongly condemn, the false and dangerous method of interpreting Scripture adopted by this society, and which by leading to the disuse of so many external observances, has, we doubt not, by the just judgment of God, and, in the very nature of things, been the chief cause why so many of them, beginning with the neglect of outward baptism, have ended in the denial of the inward, and in the shipwreck of all true faith.

While on this subject, it may not be amiss to allude to another difficulty in the way of those who hold that in baptism only is found the regeneration, or first beginning of sanctification in the heart, and that without it there can be nothing with which to work, and on which parents and others may operate. There are those amongst us, who, while highly exalting baptism, and dwelling much on the mere mode of it, yet sincerely believe that it should not be administered to infants, but postponed until the actual exercise of faith; and yet they think it proper to endeavor to prepare their children for it by a pious education, in dependence on the divine blessing. Some of these are happily successful, and see the fruits of their prayers and efforts in the early piety of their children, though not baptized in infancy; while numbers who were baptized, and have received some pious nurture and admonition, never exhibit such evidences. God, therefore, does not restrict the first gift of his Spirit to baptism, else the unbaptized could never take the first step in religion, whether in early youth or at any later period; unless, indeed, we should adopt the theory of some amongst us, who, in this respect, much resemble the Romanists, in maintaining that a living, saving faith is not required for

baptism; that is, such a faith as can only be put into the heart by the Holy Ghost; but that a mere assent of the mind to Christianity, as a fact, is sufficient; and that if we come to baptism with that, then, and for the first time, the Holy Ghost will be given unto us, and we shall be born again, exercising true faith and repentance unto salvation. Surely I need not say how contrary to all the teaching of our church such a theory is. The only faith which she knows and requires is a lively faith; the only repentance, one so deep and strong as to enable us to forsake sin and lead a new life. These are required most positively of the adult before baptism, and the faithful promise of them demanded of the child. On this subject we shall speak more fully hereafter.

And now, should any suppose that we mean to leave it to the decision of man, whether or not he is to observe this divine ordinance, as may seem necessary or important to him—that he may at pleasure dispense with positive institutions and outward forms, because moral principles and inward affections are more important, we can assure them that nothing can be farther from our belief or design. It is most suitable to our nature, not only that there should be outward things—visible words, as the Fathers called the sacraments—addressing themselves to our souls through the senses, and thus becoming the channels of divine grace, but that there be positive precepts, as tests of our obedience, even though we may not see any natural and necessary connexion between them and the divine blessing promised to the proper observance of them. Thus it was from the beginning, when God commanded man to refrain from a certain tree of the garden, and when one act of disobedience brought so much evil on mankind. In that case there was no necessity for transgression, no impossibility of performance; but the spirit of disaffection arose in the bosom of our first parent, and he was banished the blissful abode, though not left without hope of regaining the divine favor. In relation to the command to be baptized, so plainly given, where no invincible prejudice against it is instilled into the youthful mind—where the duty is admitted, the call made, the opportunity afforded, the salvation promised—who can hesitate to say that any one, wilfully and deliberately refusing to comply, and continuing so to do while



the Saviour's words are ever sounding in his ears, cannot be saved. It is only to say that a rebel against the authority of Heaven, thus living, thus dying, cannot be admitted to its honors and joys. Such conduct proves a heart destitute of piety. Such an one is condemned already. A precept or ordinance, much less emphatically urged in Scripture than this, thus violated, were certain loss of the soul. Any requirement, however comparatively trivial, wilfully contemned, and habitually neglected, must prove fatal to the soul. Let it be remembered, also, that the neglect of baptism through life, is not merely one act of disobedience, but a long series of acts, continuing from day to day, and forming a regular habit of disobedience. If it could only be performed at one particular time in the course of our lives, and we should permit that time to pass by without it, we might plead that the penalty was too severe; but such is not the case, for this is a standing command from day to day, and we are ever disobeying it while we continue unprepared for it, and do not ask for it. He who offendeth in one point is guilty of all, for he shows that he is not subject to the law of God, but is a rebel; and can only be treated as such.

On this subject let me add one word to parents. If it be God's will that you present your children to him in baptism, that he may receive and bless them, and you fail to do it, although it be far from us to say or believe that, for this very neglect, of which they are guiltless, God will, should they die unbaptized, destroy their poor bodies and souls in hell; yet, according to God's established laws, you know not how much you may offend him, injure yourselves, and hinder the spiritual welfare of your children. This neglect on your parts may be only the first of a series of neglects, each contributing to the other, and all contributing something to your children's ruin. Your neglect of it, while they are children, may operate as an argument and example for their neglect when they come to years of discretion. Even unnecessary delay on your parts in bringing them to Christ's ordinance may lead to other delays, and all may contribute to the delay of their conversion, until it be too late, forever. The indifference and dilatoriness of many, in this respect, can only be ascribed to a want of deep feeling as to the necessity of di-

vine grace for the renewal of the corrupt natures of our children, and want of faith in the capacity of our children, at an early age, to receive the same, although it be not tied to the moment and act of baptism. It is impossible to say how much the needless delay and heartless performance of our part in this ordinance may injure the best interests of the child, by displeasing God, and leading to other neglects and failures in his education. One of the Fathers, in urging a speedy bringing of little children to the Lord, enumerates a number of trivial and unworthy excuses which some make for delay, as the want of fine clothes, in which it may appear well to the eyes of men, or the weather, or such like things. It is to be feared that too many parents, as well as many of the congregation, have their thoughts more engaged about the appearance and behavior of the child on that occasion, than on the solemn duty itself. Were they to bring their children at the earliest period which prudence would allow, it would seldom happen that their minds, or the minds of others, would be diverted from the devotions of the occasion by the cries or misconduct of the little ones.

Having thus endeavored to remove some unjust imputations from our Church, and uncomfortable feelings from the minds of some who might fear that she was liable to these imputations; having in few words affirmed that not only the Church, but the Scriptures, were opposed to certain extravagant and very painful views on the subject of baptism, which from time to time have been maintained by some, I now conclude the chapter by commending to the readers what, all surely must admit to be the best method of coming to a satisfactory conclusion on this subject.

As the Word of God is our only infallible rule of faith; as baptism is just what God's word makes it, and not what the Fathers, the Reformers, or the Prayer Book make it; so, if any one truly desires to form a right estimate of it, either in itself, or relatively as to other things, let him take up the New Testament, and read it over carefully and prayerfully; as he proceeds, let him particularly attend to what is said of baptism, and also of faith, repentance, the word, the Holy Ghost. Let him mark them in their connection with each other, and when they are spoken of separately. Let him

notice what is the frequency and the emphasis with which each is mentioned; what the effects ascribed to them, either separately or in their connection. Let him attend to the context, which often sheds light upon the text. He may sometimes derive aid from a commentator, in finding out the meaning of some figurative expression, or some allusion to ancient usages; and, therefore, such reference is not to be forbidden. By so doing, I am confident that, though a clear and satisfactory view of the meaning of every passage relating to baptism may not be had, yet the candid inquirer will not fail to attain to a sound view of the design and relative position and importance of baptism, as subsidiary to those absolutely essential conditions of salvation—faith and repentance.

The same mode also would I recommend for ascertaining the sense of our church in her formularies. Let both of her baptismal services be carefully studied in connection with the catechism, the articles, the homilies, and the whole prayer book, and compared together; and though the inquirer may be unable to understand and reconcile every word, he will scarcely fail to arrive at a conclusion which ought to satisfy him. He will perceive that the Church faithfully aimed at a strict conformity with Scripture, as to language and doctrine, and has set forth none of those extravagant and most unscriptural doctrines held by the Church of Rome, and which were denounced so strongly in the sermons and writings of the Reformers.

## CHAPTER II.

### *Scriptural view of Circumcision and Baptism.*

It will be a leading object in this treatise to show how God is pleased to select, as a channel through which to pour forth his mercy and grace, that which is also permitted to be the means of entailing sin and misery on man—I mean the connection between parents and their offspring. If Eve was bone of Adam's bone and flesh of his flesh, so are children of their parents—partakers of their nature, deriving their existence, soul and body, through them, and for a while entirely dependent on them. It was the promise of God to our unhappy fallen parents, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Accordingly, when Cain was born, they exulted in the thought that in him the blessing was come. How sadly must they have been disappointed when they saw in him the murderer of his brother, and how deeply affected at thought of their own sin must they ever have been when perceiving, in any of their children, the exhibition of that sinful nature which they felt working in their own members, and which they had been the means of communicating to others. How deeply should this affect all parents, and how earnestly and speedily should they apply to God for his grace to prevent the fatal effects of it. Though disappointed in their first hope, yet we read that, in process of time God gave them another son in place of Abel, even Seth, in whose line was Enoch and Noah. His children and descendants were called sons of God; they called on the name of the Lord; they were the righteous, until they intermarried with the daughters of men, the ungodly ones, and became corrupt. At length, God saw that the wickedness of man was so great on the earth that he must purge it by a deluge. He chose eight only from all the millions which swarmed on the earth, and they were all of one family. God blessed the children of Noah, and chose them to be the means of replenishing the earth and fulfilling his promise. Again, when the children of men had become so corrupt that all truth and godliness was perishing from the earth, God chose from among them the patriarch Abraham



to be the father of the faithful, in whose line the promised Saviour should be born. The reason assigned for it was—I know my servant Abraham, that he will command his household after him. He could trust him with this great work, for he would, by godly discipline and instruction, train up his children and servants in the service of the true God, and in the hope of a Saviour to come. The promise of God was to him and his seed after him, that he would be to them a God, and they be to him a people; he a father, they sons and daughters. Many years after this, and after God had given proofs of his faithfulness to Abraham, and Abraham of his faithfulness to God, the Lord appeared to him and renewed his promise, and then appointed circumcision, to be applied to himself and his household, as a sign and seal, or token of the covenant, whereby they might be the more assured of his faithfulness and truth, and be known to be his peculiar people, and become bound to keep his commandments. Although God had not only promised once, and then sworn to it, saying—Surely, blessing I will bless thee—thus, as the apostle says, by two immutable things, giving them strong consolation; yet he was pleased, also, to add another confirmation, even a mark on their bodies, on their first coming into the world, as soon as they had a visible existence, in order that they might be the more assured of his love, and also reminded of their obligations. In connection with this rite, and in order to give it efficacy in after life, God gave laws to his people, and enjoined it upon them to see that these were most carefully inculcated upon their children, and obedience required. At sundry times, and divers manners, God spake to the fathers by the prophets, and caused all the words to be written for the study of his people, that by his perfect law he might convert their souls, and make them wise unto salvation. By his Spirit he opened the eyes of their minds to see wondrous things in that law; wherefore, the apostle, in answer to the question—“What profit there was in circumcision, or what advantage there was to the Jew?” says—“much every way; chiefly that unto them were committed the oracles of God;” they had the knowledge of the truth. If they did not embrace the truth when capable of understanding it, their circumcision virtually be-

came uncircumcision; it profited not unless they kept the law; though they were in a sense of Israel, yet still were not Israel. He only was the Jew, who was so inwardly; that only was circumcision, which was of the heart. That the Jews thus regarded it, as only effectual for good if owned and ratified when they came to years of discretion, is evident from the fact, that, though there was no such command given of God, yet at the time of their circumcision certain persons called sponsors were required to promise the same in their name, and at a certain age they were expected to come forward and renew these promises, and then partake of the passover; and, on a failure so to do, they were considered as renouncing or breaking the covenant. It is a notorious fact that the Jews, beyond any nation on earth, have always been most particular in teaching the precepts of their religion to their children, and in making them accurately acquainted with the contents and meaning of their sacred books; hence their firm adherence to the same. As to the design and use of circumcision, surely the pious and enlightened Israelites could have been at no loss. It was a sign or seal of a covenant between God and the family of Abraham, in which God made certain promises to the posterity of Abraham. "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee," contained everything which man could need. In it was especially found the precious promise of that seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head, that Saviour who was to overcome the wicked one, that forgiveness of sins which poor sinners needed. And as no one could come to Christ except he was drawn by the Spirit of God, as no one could be made meet for the Heaven purchased by Christ, except he was sanctified by the Holy Ghost, so the promise of the Spirit was also contained in it. These two things are the sum and substance of the promise to Abraham and his posterity, viz., the forgiveness of sins through the atonement of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Ghost to make us meet for Heaven. The whole Jewish dispensation was appointed to prepare for this; the whole law, moral and ceremonial, was a school-master to bring us to Christ. The moral law was designed to convince of sin; the ceremonial law, with all its sacrifices, to show us that, without shedding of blood, there



could be no remission of sin. All the purifications with water were designed to show us how our hearts must be washed from sin by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The pious Jew understood this, and delivered it to his children. He looked for a Saviour to liberate from sin, and sought the aids of the Holy Spirit to circumcise his heart. Circumcision was to each child, as soon as he entered the world, a seal of these promises; an assurance to each one, of those promises which were made generally to all, before they had any existence. Circumcision did not first cause God to have pity on the child, and to promise favors on certain conditions, but only certified and sealed what was felt in the bosom of God, and promised long before. Circumcision did not first create duties and obligations on the part of the child not before existing, but only set them forth most impressively. It was, on the part of God, a recognition of the child as a child of promise and of the church; and an union of it to the people of God by an appointed ordinance. Sometimes God anticipated this recognition and designation of them, by sanctifying them, or setting them apart for holy purposes before they were born—as in the case of Jeremy and John the Baptist. But however God's good will may have been towards them while in the mother's womb; and as the sanctification of them—whatever that may have been—it is evident that the child must have a being among us ere it can be added to a visible church, and receive the promises, or any seal of them. As the promises were, before the existence of the child, so they must be his, as soon as he begins to exist; though they can only be publicly made over to him, by the sealing of the same, when he has a visible being, or is borne into this world. So soon as this takes place the instrument is completed, and the seal set. Hence God's command, that even on the eighth day, as soon as it could be safely done, the child must be entered into covenant. The promise of the forgiveness of sin, and the gift of the Spirit, must be sealed unto him; and thus an assurance is given that the evil nature he brings with him into the world shall not be his condemnation, nor his actual sins either, provided he uses the Holy Spirit, now pledged to him as a sanctifier of his nature, and trusts to the covenant mercy of God

in Christ; otherwise all is frustrate, the covenant is broken, the soul is cut off from God and happiness forever.\*

Such is the object of circumcision in relation to the posterity of Abraham, in whose line all the families of the earth

\* *On early dedication of Children.*—It may not be amiss to dwell particularly on this point. Not only was the determination to be merciful to man, through his Son, and by his Spirit, in the mind of God from all eternity, but in his word, this good will towards infants, as exhibited by Christ when he took them in his arms, was set forth in repeated promises, generally, to all who should have being. As soon as any soul should begin to exist, the good will and the promise of God had an object on which to act. We read of some who were sanctified, or set apart for some holy purpose, even before they were born into this world; which shows that they were recognised by God before they were even born—of course before either baptism or circumcision. But all will perceive that they must have a visible existence before the visible Church can recognise them, or they become subjects of any ordinance appointed for the visible Church. As soon as they are born however, they become proper subjects, and it seems to have been the design of God, by the appointment of circumcision at so early a period as the eighth day, to show to men, that his promises were theirs, as soon as it was possible to do so; that is, as soon as they had any visible existence. The admission into his Church, by the appointed seal, was almost contemporaneous with its birth, being as soon after as was practicable without danger of life. Some of the Jews considered the eighth day as the first day of the child's life, believing that a child was not perfect until one Sabbath had passed over it. It was only in case of the sickness of the child, that they felt themselves at liberty to postpone the initiatory rite, knowing that God preferred mercy to sacrifice. The Christian Church has ever been urgent on this point, wishing that the application of the seal of God's promises should be as nearly as possible contemporaneous with its existence; not even waiting, oft-times, for the mother to regain the health and strength with which to bear it in her arms to the Church of God; so that God is not obliged to suspend his love until the parents shall choose to bring their children to him for a blessing. His good will and promise is to them ere they are born; and as soon as they are born, he bids them be brought to him, to receive the seal and assurance of it. If the beginning of the Christian life seems to be identified with baptism, it is because God and the Church would have baptism to be at the very beginning of their visible existence. So, as to adults, it is evidently the will of God, that as soon as they truly believe in Christ, and renounce all sin, they ought to be baptized—baptism and their Christian life should be contemporaneous; so it was at the first. See how immediately the jailor, the eunuch, those on the day of Pentecost and others, were baptized after their conversion. So the Church would have it to be with confirmation; as soon as they have resolved to fulfil their baptismal vows, they are fit subjects for confirmation, though it is not always practicable to have it administered.

were to be blessed. But it was not restricted altogether to the children of Abraham. From the first it was extended to servants and strangers born among them, or coming and living among them, and thus enjoying the means of knowing the true God. These, and any others from surrounding nations, becoming converts to the Jewish religion, were, together with their children, by express command of God, taken into covenant. These were called of God in another way—not by birth, but by the word of instruction. When these were introduced into covenant, it was not by circumcision only, but by baptism with water, and by sprinkling the blood of some animal sacrificed on the occasion; so that the promises of sanctification by the spirit, and forgiveness through Christ, were set forth by these ceremonies. Indeed, the Jewish Rabbis say, that their fathers also, entered into covenant by circumcision and baptism and the sprinkling of blood; the two latter being with them only attendant circumstances, a part of the ceremony, just as the use of oil and salt among the Romanists are parts of the ceremony of baptism. But in relation to proselytes from the heathen, as all other nations were reckoned unclean, they were thus washed from their filthiness. They were also said to be baptized into Moses—that is, into the Mosaic religion or dispensation. All who were thus baptized, were said to be regenerate or new born, as a child is new born.\* Renouncing their Gods, their country, and all their kindred, old things passed away from them, and all things became new. It is thought St. Paul alluded to this when he said, “henceforth know we no man after the flesh.” As we often say, christen instead of

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\* Heathen proselytes, though baptized without any command of God, were said to be regenerate and born again, because taken out of the idolatrous world where they were “sinners of the Gentiles, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” and put into the Jewish Church, the family of God, and thus made the sons of God by adoption. When Christ appointed baptism, he bid his apostles go into all the world, making proselytes from the whole heathen world—adopting them into his family—grafting them into his Church. Those thus proselyted or disciplined—thus taken out of the Heathen world, were still said to be regenerated or twice born. The same terms were applied to their children, when baptized; for the promise was to those who believed and their children—they were all thus the children of adoption.

baptize, so the Jews said of their Gentile converts, that they were regenerate, instead of baptized. We are also informed that a convert, if of age, made profession to a court, (which consisted of three grave men,) that he would keep the law of Moses. In the case of minors, the court itself did profess, in their name, the same thing, (just as in the Christian Church the godfathers do,) if their parents were not there to do it for them. The court was called the house of judgment, and became a father to the child. Male children of such converts, under thirteen years and a day, and females under twelve years and a day, were baptized as infants, at the request, and by the consent of the parents, or the authority of the court—the child not being regarded as yet a son of assent, that is, capable of giving assent. An Israelite might also adopt a Heathen child, and baptize him. We have been thus particular in mentioning these facts, because they have a bearing on what will yet be said, as to the meaning of certain words now in use, and on certain forms and rules peculiar to our Church touching baptism. Having thus seen what were the promises of God to the posterity of Abraham, and to all who should, from the nations around, come to the knowledge of the true God, together with their children, let us inquire into the continuation and consummation of the covenant under the Christian dispensation. The Church and covenants of God have been the same in every age, the promises the same, the end and object the same.\* The Lamb slain from the foun-

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\* *Jewish and Christian Church one.*—The Jewish and the Christian Church were one stock, or tree; the unbelieving Jews were cut off from the tree by reason of unbelief; the believing Gentiles were grafted into it, by reason of faith. The believing Jews continued in it, only laying aside some things no longer required. The firm belief of the identity of the Church in the minds of many of the Jews, was evident from their reluctance to relinquish many things in the Jewish dispensation, as circumcision and the Sabbath; although they used baptism, and observed the Lord's day, still, for a long time many of them, especially those in Jerusalem and Judea, observed circumcision and the Jewish Sabbath also. We are told that even a number of the bishops of Jerusalem were both circumcised and baptized—in infancy, no doubt. We know how much trouble this subject gave the Apostles; how they were obliged to yield to existing prejudices, allowing the Jews to practice it, though forbidding the yoke to be imposed on the Gentile converts. Even Timothy was circumcised by St. Paul, because one of his parents was of Hebrew extraction.



dation of the world for the sins of men was Jesus Christ, who, in the latter days, came by his death to deliver us from our sins. All who believe in him, together with their children, are the children of the covenant—the promises are to them. Though in one sense they are children of wrath, because inheriting evil natures which must be offensive to a holy God, whose nature is opposed to all sin; yet, in another sense, they are children of grace, because children of the promise. As an earthly father may, at one and the same time, be grieved at, and angry with, a child of an evil disposition and conduct, yet pity and love him, and be doing all in his power to reform him, that he may make him his heir and bequeath him his blessing; so God may, at the same time, frown upon the sinful nature and evil actions of his covenant children, and yet love them, and resolve that nothing shall be left undone on his part, consistent with his attributes and their free agency as rational beings, to save them from their sins; thus are they, at one and the same time, children of wrath by nature, and children of grace by promise and God's tender mercy. Under the Christian, as under the Jewish dispensation, all this is by a seal assured to children, as well as adults. As to Abraham, the promise was to him and his children, and the sign put upon them at their birth, to show that their interest in the covenant began at once. So on the day of Pentecost, when the spirit was so largely poured out, it was again repeated, that "the promise is to you and to your children, and to as many as the Lord shall call;" that is, to as many as shall hear that sound of the Gospel which was to be preached through all the world. Our Lord had before, in the most touching manner, declared of little children that they belonged to the kingdom, taking them in his very arms and blessing them, and assuring his disciples that they could only enter the kingdom as little children, as children of the promise, as objects of grace, as the purchase of his blood—who could do nothing to merit Heaven, but must receive it as a free gift. St. Paul also tells us, that even when one of the parents only was a believer, that their children were holy; that is, the children of promise, to whom the kingdom belonged, by right of the promise made to parents and their seed. One change was made in the form, though not in the

substance of the covenant. The seal, the public ratification of it, was changed from circumcision to baptism, as the Pass-over was changed into the Lord's Supper. Baptism, an emblematical mode of initiation into many of the schools and systems of the Pagan world, and which, as we have seen, was used for the introduction of Pagan converts into the Jewish church, and which John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, used to prepare his disciples for Christ's coming, and to which Christ himself submitted in order to fulfil all righteousness, was now appointed as the seal of the covenant, the public designation of each child of promise, as the object of God's love, the incorporation of it into the Church of Christ; the fellowship of his people, called the body of Christ. Those promises, which before had been general to all, even before they had any existence, and which were sure as God's word, were now sealed to each one so soon as it had a visible existence; for the Church enjoins that they be brought as soon after their birth as is practicable, not from any superstitious view of the ordinance as indispensable to salvation, but as a thing most natural and consistent, and agreeable to God's institution under the former dispensation. And as we have seen that the Jews styled these converts from Paganism, who were baptized into Moses, the regenerate, or new born, because they, for themselves and their children, had renounced their gods and chosen Jehovah; so it is believed our Lord, in allusion to this, and adopting the language in common use, said to Nicodemus, "except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven;" and St. Paul also calls it, "the washing of regeneration," for the same reason; these terms being used sometimes as a substitute for baptism. Those who were baptized, were said to be baptized not into Moses but into Christ—to have put on Christ—to have embraced and professed his religion. It is to be observed that, although the covenant, the promises, and the seal, are all of the Lord's appointment—for he alone has the right to make them, and the power to execute them—yet the seal being put on our bodies, he must assent to it, for ourselves and children, and thus it becomes a joint act; and so also must we receive the promises by

faith, and apply them, or they will be unavailing. Although the seal is only applied in baptism, yet the promises were before baptism. Baptism did not create them, did not first awaken pity in the Divine mind, and induce God to offer forgiveness and his holy spirit; neither did it first bring us in debt to God, and put obligations on us; all these existed before, and were only set forth in baptism, so as to assure us, that through Christ's death neither our sinful natures nor actual sins, if repented of, shall be our ruin; and that the Holy Ghost which was promised has adopted us, and will do all that is needful in order to prepare us for Heaven. To be thus assured of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit, to be put into the bosom of the Church for training, instead of being left to perish in our sins, is surely sufficient to justify the title of regenerate, by comparison with our natural state of death. It is not necessary, in order that baptism may be of any avail, that at the moment it is administered a new soul, heart, or nature, be formed within the child. The forgiveness of original sin, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, may be granted to the child on its very birth, or before it, in its previous state, and yet no moral change take place at the time; just as an estate may be left or given to a child, though he cannot use it at the time, and may abuse and lose it afterwards. So with the soul of fallen man; the Spirit promised may properly be said to be given to it in its unconscious state; and then as its faculties and affections unfold, it may, through the word and other means, bring the child to faith and repentance; may, by an effectual operation, renew it in the spirit of its mind. The one is the estate given, the other the estate used and enjoyed. The gift of the Holy Ghost, and being renewed in the spirit of our minds, are very different things—the one the cause, the other the effect—and should not be confounded together, since they may not be identified as to time; and indeed one may never take place, for we may always resist the Holy Spirit until it be taken from us, and the work be left undone.

Nor must we confound together the seal with the covenant or promised mercies—making the seal every thing, and, of course, indispensable to salvation. A seal is the



completion of some instrument which contains a contract or promise, and is sometimes, though not always, made necessary to the validity of the contract, or the legality of the title. The main point is the promise. A man of truth will perform his promise, even though for some cause there has been an omission of the seal, all else being right. And shall we suppose that when God has made solemn promises to believers and their children, adding a sign or token of the same, and requiring it to be put upon their bodies, that if, through unavoidable necessity, the believer or the child dies without this mark, though having all else, that God will in anger banish them from his presence, and shut them up in hell? Or shall we, even if shrinking from this dreadful supposition, say, that we judge not, but leave them to the uncovenanted mercies of Heaven, that we have no right to God to go further? Shall we thus say, because the appointed seal could not be applied, the adult perhaps desiring it, and the infant unable even to desire? Were not the promises to believers and their little ones before the seal is applied? Is not that only a confirmation of the same, and a mode of publicly applying them to the living? Is it an honoring of God and his ordinance to suppose, that he cannot or will not perform his promises, because a form that could not be observed was wanting? What man of honor would not feel insulted by such an insinuation against himself? God appointed the sign in addition to his word and oath, in condescension to our weakness of faith; and do we honor him by yielding still more to our unbelief, and doubting whether he can or will save unless the sign be added, when that is impossible, and all else is complied with? God declared, most solemnly, that although man was exceedingly corrupt, he would no more deluge the earth; and, that he might see as well as read this promise, he put his bow in the cloud, and bid man look at it, and not fear another deluge. Should any one contemptuously turn away from it, and refuse to look, he may well suppose that God would be angry. But what if one had been born blind, and could never see it, would God's anger kindle also against him? So, if any despise and refuse baptism, he may well fear, or rather

be assured, that God will not fulfil his promise of the Spirit to sanctify him, or of the forgiveness of his sins through Christ.\*

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\* *Forgiveness of Sins.*—We may err as much in making forgiveness dependent on the application of the seal of baptism, as in regard to its purifying effect. When the instrument itself, God's word, solemnly promises it to believers and their children, shall God, the author of that instrument, make the forgiveness of original sin to children—the children of promise—depend on the caprice or inability of parents, so that if the child dies without baptism, it shall lose all that is promised in the writing or instrument? Shall he make the forgiveness of original and actual sin to a pious and believing adult depend on something he may be unable to obtain? Be this far from God, to be such an hard taskmaster, reaping where he has not sown. If St. Paul could say that he found mercy to his persecution and sin, because he “did it ignorantly in unbelief,” how much more shall we be assured that God will not refuse mercy to a true disciple, because he could not comply with one of those outward things which are enjoined upon believers in order “to fulfil all righteousness.” To doubt this, seems to cast great dishonor on our Lord. What man of honor, justice, humanity, would refuse to fulfil his part of a contract, merely because, from unavoidable necessity; or some great cause, the seal could not be put, and the legal title completely made out, when all the other conditions had been complied with? Such a supposition does great injustice to our Lord and our blessed religion. If God will not lay on man more than he will make him able to bear, if he does not reap where he has not sown, surely he will not be severe on an infant, but, as a generous creditor, will have patience until he pay all; and, should he die before that is possible, will freely forgive him all. If any say, as I have heard some say, that we must have God's positive word for it, before we can say certainly that even unbaptized infants can be saved, might not the argument be turned against them by those who ask, where is the express word commanding this baptism? Both are inferences, but very plain ones, to the author's mind.

### CHAPTER III.

*The foregoing views substantiated by high authorities.*

The first which I shall adduce is that of Dean Noell's catechism, which was set forth by authority in the reign of Edward the Sixth, as an explanation of the doctrines of the Church, as then established. The next is that of the catechism of the celebrated Calvin, whose sentiments on the subject of baptism have been often quoted, as establishing the interpretation put upon those passages in our catechism and baptismal services which relate to baptism. It will be perceived that there is a striking resemblance between the two as to the order observed, the language used, and the views set forth. If our own short catechism be compared with both of them, it will be seen clearly that it is either an abridgement of the same, with the entire omission of those parts of Calvin which treat of predestination and church government, or else that Calvin's and Noell's were only enlargements of ours.

*Extract from Noell's Catechism.*

“Since by nature we are the children of wrath, that is, aliens from the Church, which is God's family, baptism is a kind of entrance into it, by which we are admitted; whence we receive *a full testimony* that we are now in the number of the sons of God.” “The use of baptism consists in faith and repentance; for we should first be fully persuaded, in our own minds, that we are purged by the blood of Christ from all impurities, and are acceptable to God, and that his Spirit dwells in us. In the next place, we must endeavor, with all our might, to mortify the flesh, and live righteously in the sight of God, and show to all, by a pious conduct, that we have put on Christ at baptism, and are furnished with his Spirit. But that faith and repentance should precede baptism, is exacted only of those who are grown up, whose age is capable of both; but the promise of Christ unto

the Church, in whose faith infants are baptized, is sufficient for them for the present; when they grow up they are bound to acknowledge the reality of their baptism, and to feel its power on their minds, and to evidence it by their lives and manners." It then states, "that God declared himself to be the father of the Jewish children, and admitted them to circumcision, and that our Lord declared the kingdom of Heaven belonged to little children, and that 'it would then seem to be the highest injustice' to prohibit their access into *the porch* whom God himself designed to accept into his heavenly *palace*, and for men to exclude them in a *measure* from the Christian commonwealth."

*Extract from Calvin's Catechism.*

"Baptism is the appropriate way of entrance into the Church. For in this we have the testimony, that we who were before strangers and foreigners, are received into the family of God, and numbered among his household." "The right use of baptism is in faith and repentance, that is, that we first determine, by a sure confidence of soul, that we are cleansed from all spots by the blood of Christ, and are acceptable to God; then, that we believe that his spirit dwells in us, and that we make this manifest by our works among others; and also that we assiduously exercise ourselves in striving for the mortification of the flesh, and obedience to the will of God." As to the objection, that these things are impossible to infants, he says: "They are not required of infants beforehand; it is sufficient if they, after they come of age, produce the fruits of their baptism; that they are admitted to baptism for the same reason that infants were admitted to circumcision; that it would be taking from them a most excellent consolation, which the Church enjoyed from the beginning. They are baptized," he says, "that they may have the visible seal that they are the heirs of the blessings promised to the seed of believers, and that, after they come to years of discretion, the substance of their baptism being acknowledged, they may, from it, receive and bring forth fruit."



*Extract from Hooker.*

Hooker speaks of children being born *within the bosom* of the Church, and therefore having a right to baptism, which he says, "is a seal perhaps to the grace of election before received." Holding the doctrine of predestination, he says: "Predestination bringeth not to life without the grace of external vocation, wherein our baptism is implied. For, as we are not naturally men without birth, so neither are we Christian men in *the eye of the Church of God*, but by new birth; nor, according to the *manifest ordinary course* of divine dispensation, new born, but by that baptism, which both declareth and maketh us Christians. In which respect, we justly hold it to be the door of our *first actual entrance into God's house*, the *first apparent beginning of life*, a seal, perhaps, to the grace of election before received, but to our sanctification here a step which hath not any before it."

Although in the above passage there are expressions which seem to magnify baptism beyond due bounds, yet if they be well weighed, and compared together, and so understood as not to contradict each other, they will lose much of their force. Although he says it is "the first step to our sanctification here," yet it must be understood, by what goes before, "the first *apparent* beginning of life, and the seal, perhaps, to the grace of election received before."

Mr. Hooker most unequivocally protests against its being necessary to salvation, but maintains that God often works without it.\*

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\* *On the Calvinistic objection to regeneration.*—There have always been those who were willing to apply the term regeneration to some children at their baptism, whether they regarded it as an incipient moral change, or only the adoption of the child, with a view to it; while they would not apply it to all infants, because their doctrinal system excluded some infants from the election of grace. At the Savoy conference the objection, by the dissenting ministers, was to the use, in our service, of the term regeneration in relation to *all* baptized children, even where the parents were not themselves Christians. They said that it was, at any rate, a disputable point, and therefore wished it omitted. Some of the followers of St. Austin, if not St. Austin himself, in the early ages, holding that none could be saved without baptism, maintained that none of the elect infants would be permitted to die without being baptized; so that the omission to baptize a child, from whatever cause, was proof that it was not one of the elect.



*Extract from Philpot, one of the early reformers.*

“But the Catholic truth, delivered unto us by the Scriptures, plainly determineth, that all such are to be baptized as whom God acknowledgeth for his people, and voucheth them worthy of sanctification or remission of their sins; therefore, since infants be in the number and scroll of God’s people, and be partakers of the promise by their purification in Christ, it must needs follow thereby, that they ought to be baptized as well as those that can profess their faith—for we judge the people of God, as well by the free and liberal promise of God, as by the confession of faith. In the Gospel he saith of infants, (that is, such as yet believed not,) ‘let thy little ones come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.’ Again, ‘it is not the will of your Father in Heaven, that one of these little ones perish;’ also, ‘he that receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me. Take heed, therefore, that ye despise not one of these babes, for I tell you their angels do continually see in Heaven my Father’s face.’ And what may be said more plainer than this? It is not the will of the Heavenly Father that the infants should perish. Wherefore, we may gather that he receiveth them freely unto this grace, although as yet they confess not their faith. Since, then, that the word of the promise, which is contained in baptism, pertaineth as well to children as to men, why should the sign of the promise, which is baptism in water, be withdrawn from children, when Christ himself commandeth them to be received of us, and promiseth the reward of a prophet to those that receive such a little infant, as he for an example did put before his disciples. P. 275, Parker edition. Again, p. 276, the Gospel is more than baptism. But children be received by the doctrine of the Gospel and not refused; therefore, what person being of reason may deny them baptism, which is a thing lesser than the Gospel. Again, p. 280, in answer to the objection, that they cannot believe, he says, “Children are accounted of Christ in the Gospel among the number of those who believe, as it appeareth by these words: ‘He that offendeth one of these little babes, which believeth in me, it were better for him to have a millstone tied about

his neck, and to be cast into the bottom of the sea;' where plainly Christ calleth such as be not able to confess their faith believers, *because of his mere grace* he reputeth them for believers. And this is no wonder to be so taken, since God imputeth faith for righteousness unto men that be of riper age; for both in men and children, righteousness, acceptance, sanctification is of mere grace, and by imputation, that the glory of God's grace might be praised. And that the children of faithful parents are sanctified and among such as do believe, is apparent from 1st Corinthians, 7th chapter, which declareth, 'that they are holy.'" Although we may not be satisfied of the correctness of the interpretation put on all the passages of Scripture quoted, yet it is most evident, that he strongly affirms the views we have presented as to the interest of children in the promises previous to baptism.

*Extract from Bishop Hooper, one of the martyrs.*

He calls a sacrament "the seal and mark of acceptance into God's grace, received before by faith." "All sacraments appertain unto none but unto such as first receive the promise of God, that is to say, remission of sin in Christ's blood; of the which promise these sacraments be testimonies, witnesses, as the seal annexed unto the writing is a stablishment and making good of all things contained and specified within the writing." P. 133. Again: "The ungodly opinion which attributeth the salvation of man unto the receiving of an external sacrament, doth derogate the mercy of God, as though his Holy Spirit could not be carried into the penitent and sorrowful conscience, unless it rid always in a chariot and external sacrament." P. 131. This is his account of the sacrament of baptism, p. 129. "I, the minister, by the commandment of God, and in the place of Christ, do christen thee, that is to say, do testify by this external sign, thy sins to be washed away, and that thou art reconciled unto the living God of our Mediator Jesus Christ." "His friends, he by these means sealeth in the assurance of remission of sin, which thou hast first received by faith, and for the promise made unto thy father and his posterity. For the promise of

God, the remission of sin, appertaineth unto the father, and also to the seed and succession of the father; as it was said unto Abraham, 'I will be your God, and the God of your seed.' It is ill done," he adds, "to condemn the infants of Christians that die without baptism, of whose salvation we are thus assured," that is, in the above promises. P. 129. Another passage, on p. 74, while it establishes the same principle, renders it probable that he believed even in a moral change effected in infants before baptism: "Such as be baptized must remember, that penance and faith preceded this external sign; and, in Christ, the purgation was inwardly obtained before the external sign was given. So that there be two kinds of baptism, and both necessary: the one interior, which is the cleansing of the heart, the drawing of the Father, the operation of the Holy Ghost; and this baptism is in man, when he believeth and trusteth that Christ is the only author of his salvation. Thus be the infants examined concerning repentance and faith, before they be baptized with water; at the contemplation of the which faith, God purgeth the soul. Then is the exterior sign added, not to purge the heart, but to confirm, manifest, and open unto the world, that this child is God's."

The sentiments of Cranmer have been quoted on both sides of the baptismal controversy, and with some show of truth, as they may on other subjects. In the treatise on the sacraments, he reckons absolution as one, and uses language, as to the power of the priest to forgive sins, which no true Protestant would venture now to use. The truth is, that his writings on several points show great changes, as the reformation progressed.

*Extracts from Thomas Becon, chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer.*

"The children of the Jews were counted, for the promise sake, the sons and heirs of God, and were circumcised; so should the infants of the Christian be baptized, as God is the God of Christians and their children. God," he says, "blessed the children of the Jews even in their mother's womb, and gave them his Holy Spirit; and is it thought that

his hand is now shortened, that he neither can nor will show like merciful kindness to the children of Christians?" "The children of the Old Testament, after they had received the Holy Ghost, even in their mother's womb, were admitted unto circumcision; yea, and that by commandment of God; and shall the children of the New Testament be barred and shut out from baptism, which have received the Holy Ghost, no less than they did under the Old Law? The best and chiefest baptism is given to the children, and shall we deny them the inferior and baser baptism." He adduces the instances of Jeremiah and John the Baptist, to prove that children are led by the Spirit of God even before they are born. He quotes St. Paul as saying, "the children of believers are holy," and of our Lord, who "pronounced them to belong unto the Kingdom, and said their angels do see the face of the Heavenly Father." Although we cannot assent to all the reasons and illustrations of the author, yet he certainly condemns the doctrine, that the children must wait till their baptism to receive any blessing from God. P. 208, his Catechism, Parker Library. Also p. 216-'17, he says, "God does not save us for this outward baptism, but for his gracious promise. He will receive the children of the Christian to everlasting life, because they be members of his Church, though it chance that they die without baptism." "God by his grace, for his merciful promise sake, saved the infants of the Hebrews, although they departed before the 8th day, and so were uncircumcised." He frequently speaks of children of believers as members of the Church, as being contained in the covenant of grace. "St. Paul (he says) called not circumcision the self-righteousness, or the righteous making, but a seal of righteousness—of the righteousness which Abraham had, yet being uncircumcised. Forasmuch, therefore, as baptism is unto the Christian even of the same effect as circumcision among the Jews, I mean not the *self-righteousness or righteous-making*, but only a seal of righteousness, and a sign or token of God's favor towards us." He proceeds again to affirm, that if infants die without it, and even pious adults, if they do not despise and refuse it, they will be saved. Again, p. 220: "Is it to be thought (he says) that the want of a little water (which ne-



cessity compelleth) can make God so fall from his truth, and this promise to be both vain and void, so that without the water he cannot save the infants whom he hath promised to save?" "The grace and Spirit of God cometh when and where it pleaseth God; they be not bound to any external ceremony, which is nothing else but to bring God into bondage of his creatures, and to make him not master of his own. Hereof then we may learn, that the sacraments be an outward witness to all the congregation of the grace which is given privately unto every man; so that through baptism the congregation of God receiveth the infant into the Church of Christ, which was received before through the grace of his promise."



## CHAPTER IV.

### *Views of our Church on the subject.*

We have already said that diversity of sentiment exists as to her teaching on the subject of baptism, and that some minds are uneasy concerning certain expressions in her formularies. In order to understand them aright, it is proper that we first carefully read over and compare together her two baptismal offices—the one for infants, the other for adults. There is one feature in them which at first sight must appear strange; that is, the almost entire sameness of the two, notwithstanding that the subjects of them differ so widely as to age and maturity of character—the one an unconscious child, the other in full possession of all his developed faculties and affections. Still the child is sometimes treated as a man, and the man sometimes prayed for as though he were a child, and needed the first blessing from God. The very same faith and repentance are required in both as qualifications for baptism; the same spirit is invoked and in the same words for both; the same new birth is prayed for for both; the same regeneration is declared to have been effected in both, and thanks are returned for it, as something certainly received. There is only this difference, that whereas faith and repentance are required at once of the adult, time is allowed to the child, by reason of his tender age, to perform this condition. But then baptism is not granted to the child without a solemn promise, made through the voice of another, that he will perform it at the earliest period in which it is practicable. On that condition the Church grants the privilege, believing that, by God's blessing on the means used, the child will fulfil the promise. It is here, just as in many earthly contracts, where certain property is sold and given into the possession of another, on his solemn promise, either by word or writing, that he will at a certain time pay the price thereof. If he does not, then the property is forfeited. As to this faith and repentance, which are required at the time of adults, and which

must be faithfully promised by the child, I surely need not stop to prove that the Church, deriving her view of them from the scriptures, regards them as the sum and substance of true piety—the only things absolutely necessary to salvation, being that great moral change in man, that holiness, without which no man can see the Lord; and that the inspiration of God's spirit is indispensable to the attainment of them—that they are the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Having noticed this identity in the two services, and asked the reader's careful study of them both, I now proceed to remark, that the things contained in them may be divided into three classes. The first class speaks of the reasons for baptism, and the qualifications for it. The second, the particular blessings sought for in baptism, declared to be received, and for which thanks are returned. The third, the graces and blessings to follow after, and which are prayed for and enjoined. As to the first class, the reason for baptism is laid in the corruption of our nature and the command of God. The qualifications have been already mentioned. About this first class there is no diversity of sentiment; neither is there as to the third class, wherein we pray, both before and after baptism, that all sinful affections may die in them, and all things belonging to the spirit may live and grow in them; that they may triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh; that they may ever remain in the number of faithful children; that they may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; that they may die from sin, and daily proceed in all virtue and godliness of living, and finally come to everlasting life. These petitions evidently relate to the subsequent life, to progressive sanctification; and the Holy Spirit is prayed for to enable them to do these things. About this class, also, there can be no difference of opinion, nor any difficulty whatever. Now, let us examine the second or intermediate class. Before the baptism of the child we pray thus: "Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." Before the baptism of the adult we pray in the very same words, that he may be born again, &c. After the baptism we say, in the same words, "seeing this child, or this person, is regenerate

and grafted into Christ's Church." We also thank God that it hath pleased him to regenerate this infant with water and the Holy Ghost, and that the adult has now been born again. Here, then, after having admitted the adult to baptism, on the supposed reality of that faith and repentance which is the substance of true piety—the moral renovation of our nature by the spirit of God—and agreed to accept the faithful promise of the child for the same, we pray for something entitled regeneration, or a new birth; we declare it has been given, thank God for it, and then proceed to pray that God's Spirit may be given to these same persons, to enable them to crucify the old man, and finally come to everlasting life. Now, the only thing we have to do, is to find out what the Church actually means by this regeneration, which is something beside faith and repentance, which were required beforehand, and from subsequent progressive sanctification. The difficulty lies in ascertaining the meaning of two scriptural words, *regeneration* and *born again*, which are evidently figurative terms. Has she explained her understanding of them in any other part of these services? We look in vain for such light. Has she any where else given a key to her understanding of them? We think she has, and a most definitive one. Beside these devotional services, in which she has in scriptural words sought to honor God's ordinance, she has a set of articles, drawn up by the same persons who prepared the offices, in which she has most carefully, and in less figurative terms, defined her views of the doctrines and the sacraments of our religion. In the 27th article, which is devoted entirely to baptism, she has most explicitly set forth her belief as to the design and effect of baptism. Let any one read over the intermediate part of the baptismal services, wherein regeneration is prayed for; and declared to be granted as the effect or concomitant of baptism, and then, if desirous to know what it is, read the following article, the 27th, "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are known from those who are not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our

adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased, by virtue of prayer unto God. The baptism of young children is, in anywise, to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." Here we are plainly told what is the effect of baptism in the opinion of the Church, viz: that by it we are publicly joined to Christ's Church or people, as by an instrument; that the promises of the forgiveness of sin and adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed, (not now for the first time given,) but visibly signed and sealed. The covenant contained in God's mind and word is now exhibited and completed by his mark put on us, and our assent given to it. Forgiveness through Christ, and also the gift of the Holy Ghost, called adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are sealed and ensured to us. By this solemn act, faith is confirmed and grace increased, not by virtue of the ordinance, but of prayer unto God. It is not said that faith is first produced in us, or grace first given to us, for these are already supposed to exist in the adult, and the promise of them, at a future time, is accepted of the child. When the article says that faith is confirmed and grace increased, it must be limited to the adult, unless the Church be supposed to look forward to the faith and grace of the child when come to years of discretion, and having them increased by looking back with prayer to this pledge of God in baptism. Neither are there any words used in the article recognising a moral change effected, a new nature bestowed, the old man of sin destroyed, but only a sign and seal of these promises, and of a public engrafting into the Church—Christ's body. The article is a simple answer to the question, what is meant by that effect of baptism entitled "regeneration by water and the Holy Ghost, and grafting into the body of Christ's Church?" I know that there are those who are very fearful of the use of the terms *new birth* and *regeneration* in any other sense than as setting forth the great moral change, the being renewed in the spirit of our minds, lest it should interfere with that, and lower the doctrine of conversion. Nor is this to be wondered at, for many have so understood and used them as to do away entirely, or in a



great measure, with a true conversion of the soul after baptism in infancy. Great care, therefore, is required to correct this erroneous view of it. While the fathers, reformers, and the Church in her homilies and elsewhere, do certainly use regeneration and new birth sometimes to set forth the grace of baptism, they nevertheless use them as well as kindred terms, to express the great moral change which those experience who, by the spirit, have faith and repentance. Gradually the terms applied to baptism have been almost entirely appropriated to the moral change, and hence the frequent misunderstanding of the doctrine of the Church. If it be now asked, what does the Church mean by these promises of forgiveness and adoption, which are visibly signed and sealed to us in baptism, we refer to what we have before said in our chapter on the Scriptural view of the covenant, and to the sentiments of the authors as quoted in the third chapter. The remission of original sin, through Christ's death, is promised to the children of the covenant, and of both original and actual sin, to the penitent and believing adult; the gift of the Holy Ghost to purify our natures, according to the promises, are herein visibly sealed to us; we are grafted into the Church, the body of Christ, and thus united to him. All that is necessary for our souls is now ensured to us. Christ's death has removed one great barrier between us and Heaven. The Holy Ghost is ready to remove all others, if we will allow it, and co-operate with it. As God created all things by Christ, and redeems sinners by him, so he adopts us as his children by the Holy Ghost, and places us under his special care to sanctify and make us meet for Heaven. Let us see if there be no transaction among men which may aptly illustrate this, our adoption by God. When some generous man adopts a poor child, be it an orphan or not, he becomes its father—he designs and perhaps engages to make him his heir, or to give him some portion; but it is on a specified condition that, at a certain age, he shall prove worthy of it. He promises that nothing shall be left undone to render him worthy of it, and is true to his promise. The child has thus received, as it were, another father—perhaps calls him by that endearing title—it may be, assumes his name—he becomes the



child of adoption. And yet he may never truly love that benefactor—may disappoint all his hopes—frustrate all his endeavors to make him worthy to be his heir, and the estate may be lost to him. This good man could neither alter the nature of the child at the time of his adoption, nor afterwards ; for he resisted all his efforts to that end. So it is with our adoption to be the sons of God, whereby we become children of grace, are born again, taken from poverty, and wretchedness, and sin. God, for Christ's sake, had determined on this as to all who should be born in the bosom of his Church. As soon as they come into the world, he commands them to be brought to him by the Church, and have this certified to each one by a visible mark. He puts them in the care of the Church; the Holy Ghost superintends their nurture, and aids by its holy influences. It is not indispensable that a new nature shall at once be put into them, in order to make them sons of God by adoption. This is to be the effect of that adoption, and the means appointed to prepare the child for its inheritance. The Holy Ghost may be given to the child, and surely belong to it, and the moral effect of it not take place at once, or at any future time. The child may always resist the Holy Ghost until it is taken away from him. We may understand what is meant by the Holy Ghost being given, and yet not effecting the object for which it is given, by considering what is meant by the Holy Spirit being taken away from us. Does it mean that God takes away from us a good nature, changes us from holy to unholy, hardens our hearts, hitherto tender and loving? No one for a moment supposes this. Nor must we confound the gift of the Holy Ghost with a view to our renovation, with the fact of our being renewed in the spirit of our minds. The one is the agent, the other the work done ; but the two are not always inseparable. "My spirit shall not always strive with man," says the Lord ; it is often most unsuccessful.\*

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\*" *Our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost.*"—This phrase is worthy of particular notice. No one can read the New Testament without perceiving that ours is peculiarly the dispensation of the Spirit. Though the Spirit was always in the world, striving with man ; though the Jews are charged with having always resisted the Holy Ghost, yet still so much more abundantly was he poured out upon the Church of

Understanding the meaning of regeneration, as the 27th article explains it, who can object to its use, except on account of its liability to be misunderstood? The very vessels of the sanctuary were called holy, sanctified, clean, because set apart for sacred purposes, though no change in their substance took place. Children were called holy, because born of believing parents; and why not baptized persons be called regenerate, for the reasons above mentioned, without supposing or affirming a moral change. But if we go beyond this, and affirm that a new nature is put into the

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Christ, that our Saviour says he must needs ascend to Heaven to send him down to carry on the work which he had begun, and thenceforth take special charge of the redeemed. This accounts for what some disciples, of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles, said of their never having heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, although they had doubtless, under his influence, been led to embrace Christianity. They had never heard of such wonderful gifts as those which the Holy Ghost now so freely poured out upon the Church. Divers were the gifts of the Holy Ghost. He appointed overseers to the churches; he separated Barnabas and Saul to their work. It is the Holy Ghost, rather than the Father or the Son, who speaks after Christ's ascent, as may be seen throughout the Acts and Epistles. The whole Church, and of course each member, is under his special care. He adopts each child as his own, and watches over it, and strives with it, for its renewal and salvation. Baptism, according to our article, is a visible sign and seal of "this our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost." The faith and grace of the adult is confirmed and increased by this sign, if the virtue of prayer be faithfully used. And if the infant, when coming to years of discretion, shall believe and repent, his faith and grace shall be confirmed and increased by thinking on his baptism, with prayer for the divine blessing. Thus may we be truly said to be born again, not of water only, but of the Holy Ghost, who adopts us, takes us away, as it were, from our earthly parents, and puts us into the family which he has charge of. In other places our Church recognises this special agency of the Holy Ghost. In the ordination of ministers it is required that they be moved to take upon themselves the holy office, by the Holy Ghost; and, in the conferring of the office of priesthood, one of the forms allowed to be used by the Bishop runs thus: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands." At first sight and sound these words would seem to declare that the Bishop actually conferred such influences of the Holy Spirit as the priest needed in his office, but a more particular attention to the peculiar phraseology would of itself lead a careful observer to question this. The meaning, however, is placed beyond all doubt, by the other form immediately following, and which was doubtless introduced in order to remove the objec-

child at the moment and in the act of baptism, we involve ourselves in inextricable difficulties. Well may we hesitate to use these words, if such be their only meaning. Unless there was some plain and positive assurance in God's Word that such an effect is produced in every child or adult at the moment of baptism, and at no time before or after, as some affirm, would the Church feel justified in requiring her ministers and members thus positively to affirm it, and thank God for the blessing, and bid sponsors cherish the gift ever after? Would she do this, when no proof can possibly be afforded at the time; and when, even if there should be an

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tions; which latter form is, I believe, always used. It runs thus: "Take *thou authority* to execute the office of a priest in the Church of God." From which it seems that the gift of office, the authority to minister in holy things, is meant by "receive the Holy Ghost for the office of a priest." Such is the explanation of it given by Hooker. Bishop Hobart had occasion to defend our Church against an attack on this point, wherein it was declared that she was guilty of something absurd, and little short of blasphemy. In a charge to his clergy, in 1815, he quotes the following passage from Hooker, as expressive of his own and the Church's view of the subject: "A thing much stumbled at, in the manner of giving orders, is the using the memorable words of our Lord and Saviour Christ, 'receive ye the Holy Ghost.' The Holy Ghost, say they, we cannot give, and therefore we foolishly bid men receive it. He says that "the Holy Ghost may be used to signify not the person alone, but the *gift* of the Holy Ghost, and that we know that spiritual gifts are not only abilities to do things miraculous, as to speak with tongues that were never taught us, to cure diseases without art, and such like; but also that the very power and authority which is given men in the Church to minister in holy things—this is contained in the number of those gifts whereof the Holy Ghost is author; and therefore he which giveth this power may say, without absurdity or folly, receive the Holy Ghost, (that is) such power as the Spirit hath endowed the Church withal, such power as neither prince nor potentate, king nor Cæsar, on earth can give." If such be the true interpretation of the Church's meaning in this place, may we not, also, when she, at the command of Christ, and under the superintendence of the Holy Ghost, brings children to baptism, admits them into her society—the body of Christ—puts on them the seal of God's promises of forgiveness and adoption as his sons; thus giving them a full title to the blessings of the covenant, then say that they have received the Holy Ghost, or been born of it, although she cannot know what, or that any, renovating influence has been exerted over their souls at the time. The priest has received the Holy Ghost, that is, the great honor, privilege, authority to minister, although perhaps, at the time, he had not the Holy Ghost in its higher sense, and never may admit it into his heart.

early exhibition of piety, it would be impossible to say that it proceeded from the supposed grace of baptism, or subsequent operation of the Spirit? It is said, that though there be never any evidences of it, yet we ought not to doubt the fact, that the children may have soon lost it—that even Cymon Magus was probably renewed in heart, but fell away and became reprobate immediately. But is there not something most distressing in the thought, that the Holy Ghost should at baptism put a new heart into the unconscious child, and though undertaking to watch over it, when neither parents nor friends should be able to do any thing for its preservation, nor the child be able to cry for help, yet permit the devil at once to come and take it away? And if there be this new nature among the promises of the covenant to children, does it not seem strange that God should so trammel himself as to be hindered from bestowing it on children until the caprice, or delay, or indolence of parents, which often puts off baptism for years, should allow him to bless one of the children of promise? As to the argument in favor of this great blessing, this spiritual change, which, it is thought, he has confined to baptism, that we ought to have faith in God, with whom nothing is impossible, that faith is the evidence of things not seen; I have only to say, that we are indeed bound to believe all that God has said and done, but are not called on to believe what he has not said, and that of which there is no evidence that he hath done it. As we must not believe less than God has revealed, so must we not believe more. The latter has filled the Church of God with superstition and corruption in ages past. Let it also be remembered, that if, on the authority of those words in our service, we must believe this moral change in infants, we must believe the very same of all adults, for the same change is ascribed in the very same words to adults and infants. Now adults are capable of testing it by their own consciousness. If there be some great moral change different from that contained in faith and repentance, which gifts they had before baptism, surely adults, coming to baptism prepared to expect some mighty operation of the Spirit, anxiously looking for it at the very time the water was applied, could not fail to be sensible of



the effect in their souls. Now, is this the testimony of the thousands of pious believers, who are continually coming to the baptismal font? But let the view taken of it in the 27th article be received, and all is reasonable and agreeable to the experience of the pious candidates. When they come with faith and grace in their hearts, in obedience to the divine command, then that very faith and grace with which they come is confirmed and increased. The sacrament is an effectual sign and witness by which God worketh invisibly in them, and they are hereby certified of God's love, and, being engrafted into his Church, thus receive the fulness of his grace—the title complete; they are thus born of water, as well as of the Spirit. In relation to young ones baptized when a few years of age, might we not look for very striking and immediate evidences of this great moral change? It is said that as adult converts often fall away from grace received, so children may, and do, fall away from baptismal holiness. But let us suppose that adult converts did as generally and greatly fall away, gave as little evidence of piety, the result of conversion, as children do of their supposed baptismal change, who would place confidence in the doctrine of conversion? There is also this difference between them, that adults are conscious both of the reception and the loss of God's grace, and can testify of it, while children cannot.

If the Church had, in the words whose meaning we have been considering, intended to set forth a moral renovation, surely she would have used language which could not thus have been misunderstood. Why did she not thank God that our hearts had been changed—our spirits renewed—the old man crucified—the new man raised up in him? There would have been then no doubt of her meaning. These things she prays for, and bids the baptized seek more and more, but she does not thank God that they have been granted. Moreover, in the catechism, she says, baptism is a means of receiving this grace, and a pledge to assure us thereof. Now, if we have received these new hearts, we have the very thing itself, and need no pledge to assure us of it; but if the assistances of the Spirit, and the conditional forgiveness of sin, and title to Heaven, be meant, then we need a pledge to assure us that they will be given. On a



careful examination of this subject, we can find no other consistent explanation than that furnished by our 27th article, and others alluding to it. We are aware that it is said by some that our articles were designed for the clergy, and are more obscurely worded than the offices. As to the latter assertion, viz., that they are more obscurely worded, we take the very contrary to be the fact. They were not intended for devotional purposes, but to explain the doctrines of the Church, as contained in her services, and serve as protests against any Romish interpretations of those services. As to the former, if they were designed for the clergy, it was to assist them to explain the doctrines of the Church to the people, and, as such, we have used them. If it be objected to the view which we have taken of baptism, which supposes God's grace of adoption to precede baptism even in infants, that it represents the church as thanking God for their regeneration in baptism, when they had been regenerated before, we reply, that, as it is not folly but truth to say, that we exist, and for months, before we are born into this world, so it is not folly but truth to say, that we are loved and adopted of God before baptism; but are then, according to the article, publicly sealed and marked as the sons of God, our title to the promises fully made out, and we enrolled among his people; and this according to God's own command.

But now it may be asked whether, beside these interesting circumstances belonging to baptism, and this grafting into the Church, and sealing of the promises, in which all must agree, there is not some other special blessing which hovers over the baptismal font, and enters into the soul of the child. When the child is sealed as the adopted one of God, is there no incipient act of the Spirit, making a first impression on the soul—no beginning of the work of sanctification—no seed deposited—no germ implanted, which are to be fostered and increased by successive operations, and aided by a pious education? Some pious and learned divines have thus expressed themselves, modestly and doubtingly of course, for it must of necessity be conjecture and hope, nothing more. The author would respectfully submit to his readers, whether there be not this serious objection to all such specula-

tions, that they are on a subject which God has placed beyond the range of the human mind. What passes in the soul of an infant, cannot be ascertained by any discovery revealed to us, or made by the mind of man. What God *can* do, or may do, is not told to us. Secret things belong to the Lord. Here, I humbly conceive, is the source of more disputation in the Church of God, than any other whatever. Attempting to be wise above what is written, reaching at things too high for us, thinking that we see clearly what is only dimly seen, as through a glass darkly, we run into much error. And how often is it the case, that men are positive, dogmatic, and anathematizing, in proportion as the subjects are but faintly alluded to in Scripture, and are in themselves dark and difficult. Witness the disputes about the Divine decrees. Witness this discussion as to what takes place in the soul of the child, at the moment and through the act of baptism. And what have the Scriptures revealed to us on the subject? What a silence is there as to the condition of infant souls, from their birth until they become responsible beings? If men undertake to speak much and positively where God is silent, will there not be in the multitude of their words much folly? What follies have not been broached on this subject. How their speculations as to infant souls have been adapted to their different systems of religion. Some have supposed them annihilated. Others have invented some middle region for the half sanctified, half unsanctified souls. Some have supposed that it was absolutely necessary that a beginning be made in baptism, or else it could not be carried on—that there would be no foundation to build upon—nothing to cultivate—as if the faculties and affections of our nature were not still left us, though corrupted, on which to act; and as if the Spirit of God could not begin its work either before or after baptism. If there is force in this objection, then it operates against the conversion of any adults who have not been baptized in infancy, except we receive them to baptism without faith and penitence, that the seed may be deposited.

But our chief objection to the adoption of this theory, and laying it at the foundation of a system, is drawn from sad historical experience. When once we assume the principle, that there is, and must be, some actual effect produced

on the soul of the child at baptism, no bounds will be set to conjecture and superstitious belief. He who ascribes most virtue to it, will have most faith—will most honor the ordinance of God; and all will vie with each other in their praises of it. The history of some of the early ages, and of the Church of Rome, abundantly testify to this. No vice of the soul, no disease of the body, no demoniacal possession, no evil that afflicted humanity, but might in the opinion of some be exorcised by the sacrament of baptism. These things should make us hesitate, before we adopt as a certain truth, what is nowhere revealed, and what is so liable to perversion. On this subject, I think our Church has acted wisely. She has indeed said that there are some things which by nature we cannot have—that by reason of their tender age, children cannot have faith and repentance, for God has not formed them so as to be capable of these things. Those who evade this by saying, that the first principles and beginning of faith are implanted in baptism, are at variance with her teachings. She does not allow them to be attainable until a later period. While she thus affirms that the infant mind is incapable of these things, she most carefully avoids any thing which should even seem to exclude the Spirit of God from an early operation, through the truth, on the youthful mind. She enjoins it on all concerned with the children to instruct them in the nature of our holy religion, and in the knowledge of their own sinful state. As their faculties and affections open, we may reasonably expect that the Holy Spirit, which is ever at hand, will seek to influence them aright. We do often perceive very early indications of a state of mind so much like that of the pious convert at a later period, that we are fully justified in ascribing it to the same heavenly influence. Beyond this, the history of God's church proves, that it is dangerous to go. Whenever we take it for granted, as a certain fact, that at baptism, a great purification of the nature takes place, the inevitable result has been, and will be, the supposition that but little remains to be done. The more of the old man is destroyed in baptism, the less remains to be destroyed; the more of the new man is raised up, the less remains to be raised up. This will be seen in

the following chapter, where we shall exhibit some of the extravagancies into which the principle has led, and compare them with the excellence of what we conceive to be the system of the Bible and the Church.

## CHAPTER V.

*On the errors and extravagancies into which the positive belief and assertion of a moral change in baptism has led. A comparative view of it with the system set forth by the Episcopal Church.*

However this doctrine may appear to some to be a harmless hypothesis, at least one which seems to honor God's ordinance and prevent its being a vain ceremony, and that therefore it should not be condemned, unless positively denounced in the Scriptures, we ought to remember that there is a solemn anathema against those who add to God's word. We must not teach for commandments of God the doctrines of men. Nor must we insist on that which after all may be but conjecture. This hypothesis has with some, in all ages of the Christian church, grown into a positive certainty, and, after having been enlarged to a most marvellous degree, been made the groundwork of a religious system, which so changed the blessed religion of Christ as to require a tremendous revolution to overthrow it, and therefore ought to be watched and dreaded in its first symptoms of resuscitation. Let us trace its history.

St. Cyprian, one of the early Fathers, speaks of being "succoured by the life-giving waters—having the stain of former years washed away in them—being quickened into a new life in them—putting off his natural self—being changed in heart and soul." St. Ambrose says "that children in baptism are reformed back to Adam's state of purity." Tertullian, answering those who objected to ascribing so marvellous a power to the water of baptism, says: "Its very marvellousness should be our reason for believing it." After speaking of the various uses God has made of water, and the reverence due to it, he says: "no wonder, then, in baptism it has the gift of quickening." This principle, that God could and did, by natural things in the sacraments, operate a



moral effect through the body on the soul even of an infant, was carried to such an extent that it led to the administration of the rite of confirmation and the Lord's Supper, not only to children, but to insensible persons in the article of death. Bishop Jewell says, that St. Bennett caused the sacrament to be laid on a dead woman's breast, thinking that the outward ceremony thereof without faith, or the inward motion of the party, might be sufficient for good. In one of the ancient churches a canon was necessary to prevent administering baptism and the Lord's Supper to dead corpses. It was required in some places that for every baptism fresh water must be put into the font, because that used was defiled by the original sin of the child previously baptized therein. Some had such confidence in its effect to wash away sin, that they put off their baptism till the hour of death, that there might be the least possible danger of losing the effect of it, which they thought could scarcely be regained. Many thought it a dishonoring of God to suppose that a child could possibly be saved without it, and therefore encouraged the performance of it by any one at the very moment of its birth, if there was the least danger of death. Others there were, and those not a few—perhaps the whole Greek church—who believed that unbaptized infants go neither to Heaven or hell, but to some middle place. There were connected with the rite of baptism a number of imposing ceremonies, such as the use of oil, salt, candles, the white robe, the exorcism, all designed to magnify the ordinance in the esteem of men. The Romish church makes great use of them in order to enforce her high views of the ordinance, which she declares to be necessary to salvation—not *generally necessary* to salvation, as our Church does. She declares that it confers grace by its own power (*ex opere operato*) on all who only place no obstacle in its way. Children of course can put no obstacle in its way, and are therefore fully operated on. The child is, according to many of their writers, made by baptism just what Adam was before the fall, pure, holy. If he retains this state, it is his justifying righteousness; if he loses it, with great difficulty, if ever, can it be regained. There are, however, very many venial sins which he may commit without losing baptismal grace, and which Adam might have com-

mitted without forfeiting God's favor. Against such views of the effect of baptism, and the justification connected with it, our Reformers strongly protested.\*

Nevertheless, the removal from our baptismal service of the corrupt appendages of the Church of Rome, and which were designed to promote the belief of an entire change of nature in baptism, was gradual. In the baptismal services which were adopted in the reign of King Edward, there were two ceremonies retained, which were afterwards left out, viz: the ceremony of exorcism and the white garment. By the former, the minister authoritatively commands the unclean spirit to depart from these infants, and prepare to burn in everlasting fire. "Presume not hereafter to exercise any tyranny towards these infants, whom Christ has purchased with his precious blood, and by this his baptism calleth to be of his flock," are some of its words. In the latter, a white vesture is put upon it, and these words addressed to it—"Take this white vesture, for a token of the innocency which by God's grace in this holy sacrament is given unto thee; and for a sign whereby thou art admonished, so long as thou

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\*Wall, in his learned work on infant baptism, in which we have a full history of the opinions which in different ages have been held as to its efficacy, says, that a divine of the Church of Rome has outdone all, "for he supposes the child at the time of his baptism to have one strong actual motion of love to God. One single instant, he says, is sufficient for the exercise of that act of love. Concupiscence is as it were mortified in that one moment. It should not be thought strange that children should love God with a love of choice at their baptism." Mr. Wall quotes very aptly against him one of his own sayings—"That learned men are sometimes most subject to error, and to lead others into error; that common people are not so apt to fall into great mistakes for various reasons"—to which Mr. Wall adds another, viz: "That common people, having no assistance from learning and philosophy, have nothing but common sense to trust to; so they generally keep close to that." The above is the best excuse for the errors of the new school which has risen up. The sentiment of St. Austin, as quoted by Wall, may also be applied to such—"if we should go about by discourse to prove that infants, which as yet have no knowledge of human things, have knowledge of divine, I am afraid we should offer an affront to our senses, when, let us say what we will, the evidence of truth overpowers all the force of our talk." St. Austin (says Wall) does not pretend that infants, who are baptized, have in any proper sense faith, or repentance, or conversion of the heart.

livest, to give thyself to innocency of living, that after this transitory life thou mayest be partaker of the life everlasting." See King Edward's Liturgies, Parker edition. After a certain period, under the auspices of Archbishop Laud and others, there seemed to be a return to some of these high views; so that at the time of the Savoy conference, in the reign of James the Second, what with the remaining influence of Laudian principles and hostility to the dissenters, whose objections to the Liturgy were in some things very trivial and provoking, we find the Bishops, and others acting with them, countenancing the idea "that only some relics of sin remained after baptism;" and that, "notwithstanding some frailties and slips of their childhood, they may not have totally lost what was given to them in baptism," using a language very apt to mislead in forming our estimate of the true condition of children, although there may not be a positive assertion of a radical change of nature in baptism. See Cardwell's History of the Conferences on the Common Prayer.

If it now be asked—why thus dwell on doctrines renounced long since at the Reformation, and of whose return there can surely be no danger? We reply, that a few years since, and we should have seen no sufficient reason for so doing; but unhappily there is now but too much cause for it. These doctrines are again revived in full force by some, and with modifications by many others in our Protestant church. Books, tracts, and sermons, advocating them, have for the last twelve years been industriously circulated amongst us. In some of them the principle is maintained that it is most natural that God should choose to dispense his grace through the material emblems of the sacraments, rather than through the faculties and affections of the soul exercised in faith and repentance; that in truth faith and repentance derive their virtue from one of them, (baptism,) and deserve not the name beforehand. One of them declares that "a miracle is performed in every baptism." Another of them\* says, "no change of the heart or of the affections, no repentance however radical, no faith, no love, come up to this idea of a new birth from above. It takes them all in and comprehends them all, but

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\* Dr. Pusey.

itself is more than all.” “As the child is created and nourished in and by the womb of the mother, so is the new soul begotten and nourished in the waters of baptism,” is his favorite comparison. He upbraids Christians with having less faith than some among the Jews, at the baptism of Pagans into their church, “who had higher notions, and figured that a new soul descended from the region of spirits on the admitted proselyte.” It is difficult at times to form any conception of the kind or degree of change supposed by these writers to be effected by baptism. Sometimes it is described as an union with Christ, like that supposed to take place in the Supper among the Romanists, when the receiver partakes of the actual body and blood of Christ, and thus is incorporated into him. At others, a sudden and great moral revolution is effected in the soul even of the infant, of which it may perhaps be conscious. One of them, some of whose writings have been published and circulated in this country—thus addresses the child :

\* “Dear Christian child! was it the power  
 “That in those gifted waters came,  
 “Which stirred thee at that solemn hour,  
 “And thrilled thro’ all thy trembling frame?  
 “Oh, was it keen and fierce the smart,  
 “When the old root within thee died,  
 “And the new nature in thy heart  
 “Rose like the swell of Ocean’s tide?”

It is however to be hoped that there are but few who would regard this in any other light than poetry ; and yet there are many others who freely advocate views on the subject more likely to be injurious, because more likely to be received and acted on. There are those who advocate a baptismal regeneration, most seriously interfering, as we think, with the scripture doctrine of repentance or conversion, superseding the necessity of it altogether in some, and of course making a very great reduction of it in others. In proof of this we adduce the following passages from the writings of Mr. Gresley, an English divine of some distinction, two of whose volumes have been published and circulated in our country.†

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\* Frederick Faber, recently gone over to Rome.

† One of the volumes is on the subject of preaching, and is addressed, to candidates for the ministry, and contains the doctrine objected to



In one of them he says, baptismal regeneration “is the beginning of the life of God in the soul”—“it is the implanting in the heart the seed of divine grace.” P. 133. “God does then and there implant the principle of faith in the child’s heart.” P. 135. “The Church takes each child into her arms, and by the use of Christ’s holy ordinance *she* confers on him a *new nature* by water and the Spirit.” As soon as they are able to understand what things were renounced in baptism, she exhorts them “*not to turn from them and repent, but renounce*—that is, to have nothing to do with them from the beginning.” P. 246. “Those who have fallen from their baptismal purity, are to be reminded of the privileges they have lost, and the imminent danger they are in.” P. 132. He acknowledges that the majority fall from their baptismal grace, but that the Church holds out to such the hope of repentance.” P. 247. “*The evangelical*, he says, dwells almost entirely on conversion.” “The churchman preaches baptismal regeneration, and, to *those who have fallen*, repentance.” P. 248. We should not thus have noticed a work of this kind, did it not, we fear, but too faithfully represent the sentiments of many as exhibited in sermons, tracts, and essays, becoming more and more common in the Episcopal Church of England and America. The very fact of the publication of this, and similar works, and the favor they find, is evidence of it. It is plain, that there is a wide difference between Mr. Gresley and those thinking with us on a subject of great importance. Mr. Gresley believes, to use his own language, “that every thing is given in baptism”—that the object of education is only to preserve that purity which is infused at baptism—that some do retain it, though the majority lose it—that the Church, assured that they have received it, and that they can by means of a pious education preserve it, does not exhort them to turn from the things renounced and repent, but to renounce—that is, to have nothing to do with them from the beginning. Now, even supposing that renounce alluded

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though in a slighter degree; the other is a fictitious work, entitled Bernard Leslie, whose object throughout is to hold up to odium the evangelical clergy of England, and to object to their doctrines. The quotations are from this volume.



only to things with which we have never yet had to do, and not to things also with which we have had to do—a perfectly new idea—we might ask if God, in commanding us to be perfect—to do no sin—thereby meant to encourage the belief that there ever yet was one man on earth who was free from sin, and needed no repentance ; but rather to show his condemnation of all sin, and to bring in all men guilty. And where has the Church, in any of her other services, furnished the shadow of a belief or hope, that one of her baptized members needed no repentance—seeing that in all of them she has provided most penitential exercises, and actually gave baptism only on the faithful promise of a repentance in after years whereby we forsake sin, and will not admit any to confirmation and the Lord's Supper, without the fulfilment of the promise—that is, a true repentance. It did, indeed, not become the Church, any more than our Lord, to use language which might even seem to allow of sin at all ; but as St. Bernard said of the injunction to be perfect, “ it did not escape the notice of the giver of the precept, that the weight of the precept exceeded man's strength ; but he judged it expedient, that man should be reminded of his insufficiency in this very way, and know what extent of righteousness he should aim at with all his might. In commanding impossibilities therefore, he did not render men prevaricators, but humble, that every mouth might be stopped.” A similar use has been made of another passage in the baptismal service, wherein the Church is called on to pray, after his baptism, that “ the child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.” It is maintained that this beginning means the holy nature put into the child—the new current given to its faculties and affections, which are only to be continued ; instead of being referred to the solemn vows made, the faith and repentance promised, the prayers offered up. It had just before been declared that he was signed with the sign of the cross, in token that *hereafter* he should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified—be Christ's faithful soldier and servant to his life's end. After the baptism it is prayed, not that the child may preserve this new nature, this purity given, but that he may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of

sin. In the final exhortation, instead of the sponsor being exhorted to remind the child of the new heart which he has received, and to enjoin it upon him to hold it fast, they must teach what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, he has made—that is, of repentance and faith, which, by reason of its tender age, it could not perform before baptism; and that he who is baptized *should die from sin*. Let any one read over the service and ask, if it be possible that the Church, if desiring to set forth the fact of the child's positive renewal, could have expressed herself in terms so illy calculated to make that impression, and convey that idea.

Having thus seen to what extravagancies and corruptions the theory of a positive change in the yet undeveloped faculties and affections of the unconscious babe has led, let us for a moment consider the theory for which we plead, and the probable effects thereof. According to the promises of the covenant, forgiveness of sin, (of course original sin in children) and the aids of the spirit, belong to our children. These are solemnly sealed to each one in baptism at his birth. They are washed from original sin, or the corruption of their nature—not from the existence and stain of it in the soul, but through the atonement of Christ from the condemnation of it. It shall not be permitted, except through their own wilful choice and actual sin, to exclude them from Heaven. If they die in childhood—that is, during any part of that time lying between their birth and the age of discretion—even though we may see symptoms of an unrenewed nature, we may be assured that God in his mercy will receive them; and that he is full able, in his own way and time, to effect whatever change may be necessary to fit them for Heaven. As they are not yet able to discern their real condition, and to choose between good and evil, we trust in God's mercy and his promises. But when that fearfully interesting period comes—the age of discretion—at that moment they are under a most solemn promise to pay the debt contracted on entering the Church—that is, heartily to embrace the religion of Christ; in other words, to believe and repent, which in baptism they faithfully promised. They now, regarded as adults, are required to determine whether they will accept or reject the religion of Christ. Yea or

may it must be. The repentance and faith which they have promised, are precisely the same required of adult converts. They must, by the Holy Spirit, through the word, be convinced of sin, original and actual—must see that they are lost sinners without a true repentance and genuine faith in Christ—must renounce the Devil and all his works, by a deliberate act of their own will, and declare war against all the sinful lusts of the flesh—must experience the renewing influences of the Spirit—must be able by it to say, Abba Father—must say, in the words of the Catechism, I heartily thank God who has put me into this state of salvation, and I feel that the Holy Spirit has sanctified me. These are not things which they have preserved from their baptism onward; for the Catechism says, they cannot by reason of their tender age perform them; it is something which they now do, and which the Church consented to wait for until this very time; that which the adult must do before baptism—precisely the same thing, and nothing else. Now, how shall we reconcile with this the views of those who say, that some retain their new nature given in baptism, so as to need no repentance; and others only a slight repentance for some sins, but no radical change, no conversion—that is, turning of the soul to God in faith and repentance. The Church teaches us but one kind of repentance and one faith—both of them deep, thorough, transforming. She requires but one in baptism. If there be any who need none, who, when they come to years of discretion are so pure as not to need the only repentance which the Church acknowledges and requires, then she has made these children at their baptism solemnly promise a falsehood, and if they renew those vows in confirmation, they renew the falsehood; and, moreover, such, according to her terms, have no right to the Lord's Supper, for she deems none worthy, except they come truly repenting of their sins, and steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; and if they do come, they must be guilty of hypocrisy while using all those deeply penitential prayers which she has provided for them on that occasion.\*

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\*If we can and if some do, live to the age of discretion, so as to need no repentance—so that their angels need never blush for them (as one

In saying, however, that they are in the condition of adults who seek admission to the Church for the first time in baptism, and who must come truly repenting and believing, I make one great difference between them. Those who have been baptized in infancy, and whose baptism has been followed up, and improved by their sponsors and themselves, are much more likely to choose the offered salvation. They are the more likely to be born again of the word through the Spirit—that word in which they have been instructed—that Spirit for which they have been taught to pray, and which has been striving with them. They have been educated for this very thing, if rightly educated. But then, there must be a time of decision—an act of choice—there is a line of division; unless, indeed, we suppose that there be some other place, or places, beside Heaven and hell, whither persons in various degrees of preparation may be permitted to go; or, unless we suppose that the ascending seats of Heaven, and the descending steps of hell, are so near to each other, and are so graduated as to happiness and misery, that there is but little choice between the highest of the one, and the lowest of the other; or, else resort to the doctrine of purgatory, in order to make up the deficiency in the imperfectly prepared. Against such theories, surely I need say nothing. At what precise period of life, the fearful moment of discretion and accountability comes, God has nowhere revealed. It doubtless varies in different persons. For the same reason that God makes uncertainty to rest on

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has expressed it) before their Father in Heaven; then surely we may expect that many will continue so to live as never to need it; and then what have they to do with our confession, and other parts of the service. Instead of being constructed for the righteous, all our services must have been intended only for the most wicked, when just awakened to a sense of great guilt—especially the communion office. It is declared in a previous address, that those only receive it worthily, who do it with a true penitent heart and lively faith. Those, therefore, who come not thus, partake unworthily, and therefore to their condemnation. The invitation is only to those who truly and earnestly repent them of their sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life.

“Hungry and naked, this is all the plea,

“All the desert is helpless misery.

“He died for sinners—if we come not thus,

“Whate’er our claims, he did not die for us.”



the time of each one's death, he conceals from children and parents the particular time when accountability begins, that they may with fear and trembling hasten the duty belonging to it. Painful has been the anxiety of some parents on this subject, when thinking on the number of young persons dying about the period where it must be found. What anguish has wrung the hearts of others whose children have died about that period, giving no sign on which to fasten the hope of a gracious change, and yet they dare not certainly expect their salvation on the ground of childhood. From the moment they reach that critical period, come when it may, if they refuse to be convinced by the Spirit, through the word, that they are sinners by nature and practice—to be humbled under the sense of sin—to ask, what must I do to be saved—to accept the salvation of Christ—to live unto God; then, henceforth, and as long as they continue thus, they are rebels, and can have no hope. The hope which we once had, that God on account of their tender age would, for Christ's sake, accept them, though unable to exercise true faith and repentance, and would make whatever change was necessary to fit them for Heaven, is now gone. As to the Church, they virtually renounce their connexion with her, having violated those solemn vows, the conditions on which she admitted them on equal terms with adult believers. If adults had asked for baptism, but refused the terms of faith and repentance, of course she would not have granted them baptism; and could she have foreseen that these would have proved false to the promises made, would she have been justified in receiving them? At any rate, their circumcision has become uncircumcision. The mere form of Godliness has been gone through, the power of it has never been felt. At this eventful age of discretion then, they have not to hold fast a holiness received in baptism, but to do that which they promised in baptism, by the help of that Spirit promised of God before baptism, and sealed to them in baptism, and which has ever been striving with them, as they needed and could use it. They have now to choose between good and evil—now to believe and repent. If they do, they are renewed, converted; they have turned unto God. If they do not, the old man, which was to be crucified, is still in them;



all the means of God's appointment have been lost upon them—all the strivings of the Spirit have been resisted, and they have been as so many tares growing among the wheat, as so many bad fish in the Gospel net. They did not become tares after they were sown in the field, or bad fish after they were caught in the net; they were so from the first, and have never been changed; they are yet in their sins.\*

If this be not the doctrine of the Church in her baptismal service and catechism, then ought there to be an entire change as to what she requires of children by way of promise, in order to baptism, and, of course, in the way of fulfilment when they come to age; for she certainly does require of them all, at that time, without exception, the same faith and repentance as of adults, even that faith and repentance which, throughout God's word, constitute the sum and substance of Christianity. I hope I shall not be misunderstood on this point. I am very far from supposing that the mind is incapable of acting at all on the subject of religion, until it has reached that point of maturity when the fearful question is decided, for or against God's service, for the present at least. Long before this, the Spirit of God may, through the means

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\**The distinction between the visible and invisible Church.*—It becomes us ever to bear in mind a distinction which is often made by divines between the visible and invisible Church. Some object to it, saying the terms are not found in the Scriptures or the prayer book. If the same words are not, the fact intended to be declared by them certainly is. Our nineteenth article says, "the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached," etc.; but, in the twenty-sixth article, it is said: "Although in the visible Church, the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority," etc. It is evident, then, that by the faithful in the first of these passages must be meant those who are baptized into the Church, and profess to believe in Christ, though some of them be not good, but evil—false professors. God only knows who the really faithful are. They compose the Church invisible to mortal eye, as distinct from the whole body. The Lord only knows who are his. This painful truth, that some are evil, runs through all our services; although we, being unable to distinguish, must sometimes speak of all who profess as, being the children of God. So it is with the Scriptures. While the Apostles sometimes, addressing the Churches as such collectively, call them saints, faithful, elect, holy, because they so professed, and most of them at that time doubtless were; yet at others, they speak of some individuals as being most certainly so, and others as most certainly the very reverse; although they had just before been included in the

used, have been preparing them for it. At a very early age some have exhibited blessed signs of a gracious change effected, especially in the hour of death. Such has ever been the belief of the Church. It may be well to advert to some of the evidences of this.

Amongst the Jews, we are told, that life was divided into five parts.\* According as they came within these divisions, they were called infants, little ones, children, young men, fathers or men, or else mothers or women. The first period was, from the birth to three or four years of age. The second, from that to six or seven. The third, from that to thirteen. The fourth, to eighteen or twenty. The fifth, to the end of life. At three years of age their names were entered in the genealogy of their family, if they had been circumcised at any time previously; if not, they were, by being refused a registry, supposed to suffer the punishment of being cut off

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general terms of holy, beloved, faithful, etc. The Scriptures are full of passages declaring that "all is not Israel which is called Israel," some are "Israelites indeed," "the circumcised in heart," "the true-hearted," "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," "the Spirit bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God." They can say "Abba Father," in sincerity and truth. While others "have only a name to live," "take the covenant of God within their mouths," and yet "it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." These are in the visible Church as tares in the field, and bad fish in the net; the great day alone can separate them. At baptism, adults join the visible Church, but if true believers, they have joined the invisible Church before.

Infants at baptism join the visible Church, and the invisible one when they become true believers, although if they die before they are capable of faith and repentance, we have reason to hope and believe God will receive them to himself. The Church in every age, has been pleased to bestow on children who were baptized, the same titles of holy ones—the faithfuls—that are applied to adults, not knowing which of them might prove holy or faithful, should they live, and seeing that in baptism they have promised these things. Interesting epitaphs taken from the tombs of little children, in the earliest ages, setting forth this, have come down to us. Being baptized and dying at an early age, their parents have recorded the fact, and given them the title of "faithfuls," mentioning how long since they were numbered among the faithful—that is, since baptism.

\*The author is much indebted for what he has said here, and elsewhere, on the subject of the Jewish estimate and treatment of children, and admission of Pagans into the Church, to the works of Isaacs on the ceremonies of the Jews, and Taylor on Apostolical baptism.

for breaking the covenant. At three years of age they were allowed to enter, with their parents, into the house of the Lord, and be present at the services ; the children of the priests to partake of the sacrifices. At the age of six or seven, when they had learned to read the books of Moses, they were considered as capable of some responsible acts. Thus Joash was, by the instrumentality of Jehoida, made to enter into covenant with the Lord, and with his people. At thirteen years of age there was something like the rite of confirmation, or renewal of the covenant of circumcision, after which they partook of the Passover. Our Lord entered the Temple for the first time one year before this, at twelve years of age, going up to Jerusalem, it is supposed, for this purpose. In all these regulations we see a continual recognition of children, as the subjects of early religious training. Is there not reason to believe that the aged St. John, in his affectionate epistle, where he addresses himself to little children, young men, and fathers, has reference to some of these divisions. He does not write to infants, for they could not understand him, but begins with children. They, moving on towards thirteen years of age, could understand his simple and affectionate admonition. He wrote to them, he says, because their sins had been forgiven them. For them a Saviour died. For them the Holy Ghost had come, and was striving with their hearts. To them the promises of God had been sealed in baptism, when they were grafted into Christ's Church. He wrote, also, to young men, because, as he says, "ye are strong, and have overcome the wicked one." These, from thirteen years and upwards, had deliberately renounced the Devil, and were engaged in a resolute and successful contest with him. Such is the view which has been given of this interesting passage, and which is surely more than probably correct. Let us, also, notice our Lord's conduct as to children. Those whom he took into his arms are called by one of the Evangelists, infants; by two others, children; perhaps they were approaching the line which divided the two classes. On another occasion, when our Lord wished to rebuke the ambition of his disciples, he took a little child and set him in the midst, and bid them to imitate him; doubtless alluding to their freedom from those ambitious desires

which animated the disciples. But he goes on to speak tenderly of such children, as little ones who believed in him. Now if the child were passed the age of three or four, and perhaps the age of seven, and was advancing towards thirteen, our Saviour might very properly speak of such as believing in him. Children of that age, piously brought up, as Timothy was from a child, might know the Scriptures. All these instances of attention to children among the Jews, so agreeing with God's directions as to their early and faithful instruction, and these acts of our Lord, surely commend them to our care as susceptible of religious influence. It is utterly impossible for the Church to determine positively at what age the decisive choice must be made—on which life or death depends. God only knows that. The Jewish Church, for the purpose of discipline, seems to have fixed on thirteen for the Passover. Our Bishops in England have determined that it was inexpedient to confirm under fourteen years of age, of course; meaning thereby to declare that, at that time, on an average the young must surely be capable of true faith and penitence; not but that many were fully capable before, and might be lost if not prepared. There is no rule in our American Church. I have confirmed a few under that age, of whose piety I had no reason to doubt at the time, nor since.\*

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\* *Age of discretion.*—At five years of age, (said one of their Rabbies,) a child should study the Scriptures—at ten, the Mishna, their book of traditions—at thirteen, he is bound to observe the precepts. If a boy arrives at the age of thirteen, then, the next Sabbath after, he goes to the Synagogue, and reads publicly at the desk, next to where the reader is stationed, and chants a portion of Scripture; if not capable so to do, one is read for him by the reader; and after going through many ceremonies, the father of said son, if living, but if deceased the godfather of the boy, or nearest relation, who has had the charge of him, goes to the desk, lays his two hands upon his head, and gives him this blessing—May you follow the same steps of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; amen and amen. He likewise says, “this day you have arrived at manhood, and from this day and henceforth, I am free from all your sins which you may commit hereafter, and you have to answer for your own deeds; from this day, and henceforth, you are reckoned among the congregation; be strict; keep the laws and the precepts; then the blessings of the God of Abraham will be your shield and guide through life.” Sometimes, in order to make up a Congregation, which required ten persons over thirteen years of age, when they became men, or young men, if there were only nine,



What, then, is the difference between the two systems? The one supposes, that in baptism a change is positively effected in the corrupt nature of man, which makes the child meet for Heaven, otherwise unmeet, and without which some think there is no promise, and but little reason for hope. This meetness has only to be preserved, may be preserved, and is preserved in some, so as not to need those exercises of mind called by some conversion; no, not even repentance, though solemnly promised. When come to years of discretion, they have only to go on thus, holding fast what they received. Should they have lost it, or so far as they have lost it, they must seek to regain it by penitence. On the other system no change of the evil nature is supposed to take place, the infection, as our article says, still remaining, but the Holy Spirit promised before to the children, and pledged, and assured in baptism, is given to assist, as it is enabled to use it in order to produce this meetness.\*

A pious education uses its best efforts to the same end. At the critical period spoken of, the question to be decided

they would take a boy, if only one day over twelve, and putting him in the midst of the congregation with an Hebrew Bible under his arm, and thus constitute him a man, for the purpose desired. Our blessed Saviour at twelve years of age entered the Temple itself, and took a place among the Doctors, asking them questions.

\*The 9th and 15th articles throw light upon this subject. In the 9th, original sin is declared to be the "fault and corruption of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam." And "this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated." It does not say that some relic of it continues in the baptized, but that every fault and corruption, or infection, which we bring into the world, and which "deserveth God's wrath and damnation." In the 15th article, it is said, that Christ alone was without sin. He was not naturally, but supernaturally, engendered of the offspring of Adam, and was "clearly void (of sin) both in his flesh and spirit." "But all we, the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." From which, it would plainly appear, that a sinless nature, either before or after baptism, in any of the descendants of Adam, since Adam's fall, is recognised in none, but in the holy child Jesus, the second Adam. The infection of sin, by which as the 9th article expresses it, "man is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit," still remains, but grace is given to contend against it, and bring us to faith and repentance; and to those who have these, there is no condemnation. See the 9th, 15th, 16th articles.

by the youthful candidate is this—Shall I come to God the Father by a true repentance, to Christ by a living faith, drawn to each by the Holy Spirit? He is not called on to hold fast something possessed, but to seize upon something held up to the view. If he does not choose life, death is his portion. Previous to that period, if taken out of this world, there is sweet hope, not from a change effected, but from the mercy of God through Christ; and as St. Paul found mercy because he sinned through ignorance and unbelief, so these, because of their undeveloped faculties and tender years, will yet be received, and God can prepare them for such a measure of glory as may await them. This we present as the most probable inference to be drawn from the Bible and the language of the Church. All the preparatory steps of a religious education—all the efforts of parents and others to instruct their young ones, to restrain them, to bring them up in virtuous habits, are directed to this object—not to keep a supposed purity within, which shall supercede the necessity of penitence, which leads by faith to Christ, but to bring them at the earliest age to deep humility and faith, as indispensable to salvation. Constitutional temperament, not baptismal purity, will make a difference in the pains of the penitence of some—some having been greater sinners, will indeed have a deeper penitence; but all must repent; the law must slay them. What must I do to be saved, must be the cry of all. Now all this, which we affirm of the two systems, is sustained by facts. The experience and observations of parents and ministers tend to this. How often is it the case, that those most piously educated, and who have been most docile, most obedient, who seem to be most pious, and who actually have been, no doubt, under the influence of grace, yet when they come to age, are by the word and Spirit convinced of sin, are deeply humbled, find it hard to cherish hope, think none can be worse than themselves, refuse for a time to be comforted. These are not the persons to be looking back to find out how much baptismal purity they have kept, how little repentance they need, how little their white robe has been sullied. They rather say, “mine eye seeth thee, O God; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” “Who can tell how oft he offendeth.” “Make

me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." The children of pious parents, if piously educated, are those who are most frequently brought to this penitent state. The burden of a pious parent's prayer is, that their children may be brought to see their exceeding sinfulness—to repent and believe. This was the promise made in their name—this the great object sought for. The evidence of it, is the great joy of the parent's heart. Now, and now only, can he have hope. Timothy was thus brought up from a child, in the knowledge of the Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation—but how? by faith in Christ Jesus, to whom, as a poor sinner, he was led for salvation. Then come good works, and not till then. All previous works, how moral soever, must not be called good before God. Without faith, it is impossible to please him. They are the works of Cain, who brought of the fruits of the ground in a self-righteous spirit—not of Abel, who came in faith with a sin offering. Our articles declare that those only are good works, which are the "fruits of faith"—"which spring necessarily out of a true and lively faith." "Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of the Spirit, are not pleasant unto God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ." See articles 12th and 13th.

If the above view of the subject be correct, how dangerous the proposal of some to look upon baptized children as little angels, and to deal with them as such, to keep them in their Paradise as Adam in his first estate—not regard them as fallen, banished spirits, who must be told how to recover their lost Eden. This false system will, in practice, lead to various errors. Some will adopt the distinction between venial and mortal sins, the former of which, some think, Adam might have committed without losing God's favor, and which the baptized may commit without forfeiting their baptismal grace. Parents, while seeing many things in their children which are certainly not conformable to God's holy will, yet still desiring to hope that they have not forfeited the divine favor, will be tempted to this distinction, and will thus reduce the standard of holiness low indeed. Others will substitute for true holiness mere natu-

ral goodness, instinctive kindness, and will think of their children very differently from what God's word would have them do. We know the partiality of parents—how blind to children's faults they are. Thus will many desire to bring their children to confirmation, not because they have now obtained the faith and penitence promised, but rather because they do not need them, because they have never lost the grace of baptism. Others will cherish the hope that their children have still baptismal grace enough left, though much be lost, to come to confirmation, in order to secure the grace the Church has to give in that rite, and thus to strengthen the grace of baptism that remains, but which is ready to die. Who does not see the perplexity into which this system must again bring the Church. Already has evil enough grown out of it. Ministers have trouble enough now with some parents, who are anxious to have their children presented to the Bishop for Confirmation, although they know nothing of true faith and repentance. How much more of such difficulty on this system. The young, thoughtless, and pleasure loving ones, if not notoriously wicked, will be brought forward in the hope of some undefined good, or because others come, and that they may not seem to renounce their baptism. But thus coming, it will be found that many of them do not receive grace sufficient to carry them a step farther. They will not approach the Lord's Supper. They will fear to bind themselves by that awful bond; and thus the Church will be filled with a description of persons, somewhat more than half members, who have received one sacrament and the intermediate rite, but for fear of being obliged by a sense of shame, even before the ungodly, to abandon some things unbecoming persons in full communion, will go no farther. This is no caricature or misrepresentation, but sad reality—a reality likely to increase upon us, if the views against which we have contended shall be adopted. Already are there fearful symptoms of this, to be seen in books and other things. This system, however it may in some minds, and in the conduct of some individuals, be connected with mortification, and sadness, and despair, lest the grace of baptism be lost forever, is nevertheless very susceptible of adaptation to those of an opposite character, and



has ever been found acceptable to the pleasure loving and worldly. Among the signs in our Mother Church of a return under the auspices of this system to corrupt practices condemned and abandoned by the pious at its reformation, we may mention the proposition of one of the leaders among the Laity, who advocates, in a treatise on the subject, the renewal of some of those Sabbath sports which the Reformers abolished, but which have more than once, by persons sympathizing with such views, been sought to be restored.

We quote, as an instance of the manner in which such things are treated, a few lines from one of the leaders in this school, who has written popular tales for the young, to recommend its doctrines. His popular tales have been printed and industriously circulated in this country, with the same intent. To those who desire to mingle something of religion, with more of earthly pleasure, his work will be acceptable. Thus does he speak of merriment on one of our most joyous festivals, grieving over the change produced in it by other views of religion :

“ England was merry England, when  
 “ Old Christmas brought his sports again;  
 “ ’Twas Christmas broach’d the mightiest ale,  
 “ ’Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;  
 “ A Christmas gambol oft would cheer  
 “ The poor man’s heart through half the year.”

Now, when we recollect how this ancient and favorite festival has been perverted to purposes of ungodly mirth, so that with many, its very original design is not thought of, perhaps not even known ; how its opponents have adduced its corruption as an argument against its observance ; how its friends have mourned, and been forced to acknowledge, that through the fraud and malice of the evil one it is often the most licentious season of the year, and when the Ministers have sometimes almost dreaded its approach on account of the dissipation attending it, is it not to be lamented that a Minister of the Church, addressing the young, should regret that such scenes have passed away, thus weakening the hands of God’s Ministers. And especially how strangely inconsistent such language in the mouth of one, who maintains that it is almost indispensable to the sustenance of our soul’s joy, to partake of the communion,

at least every Sabbath ; whereas one merriment at Christmas will comfort the heart of a poor man for half the year. Such language from a Byron, or a Moore, were not surprising ; but this comes from the chaplain\* of the late Bishop of Oxford, writing for young Christians.

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\*Mr. Paget's tales.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The view advocated in this treatise agreeable to the sentiments of the early Church generally, and to those of the Episcopal Church of America.*

In a previous chapter we have spoken of the extravagant opinions held by some of the Fathers, and of the final issue of them in the established doctrine of the Church of Rome, on the subject of baptism. It is due to them and to both to say, that the learned Bingham, whose work on the antiquities of the Christian Church is held in high esteem among those most strenuous on this subject, mentions many exceptions made by them to the necessity of baptism, and that they by no means restricted the regenerating grace of God to that sacrament, saying "that the ancients had not generally that rigid opinion about the absolute necessity of baptism (barring the neglect and contempt of the sacred institution) which some would father upon them." As to the case of infants, Bingham acknowledges that the language of many of the Fathers is very unfavorable to the hopes of salvation to those who die unbaptized; but others speak more encouragingly; and quotes a book ascribed to St. Ambrose, in which he says "that the reason why this doctrine, about the necessity of baptism for the salvation of infants, was so earnestly pressed upon men, was that parents might not be so remiss or negligent in bringing their children to baptism; which they certainly would be, if they were once possessed with an opinion that there was no necessity of baptism to salvation." This author presses the necessity of baptizing infants, as all good Christians do, upon the supposition of some benefits which the parents' care may bring the child; and contrariwise, an irreparable damage and loss which the child may sustain by the parents' default and negligence."\*

In addition to this, it is sufficient to adduce the testimony of another learned divine of our church, who has most care-

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\*See Bingham, ch. 2, book 10.

fully examined the opinions of the ancients, on the subject of infant baptism and its effects—I mean Mr. Wall, who has written two volumes concerning it.

After showing at length the sentiments of St. Austin, which however strong in some points, were entirely opposed to the idea of any inward change in baptism, and clearly distinguished between the sacrament of baptism and the conversion of the heart, which he said were often separated—he thus concludes : “ Most of the Pædo Baptists go no further than St. Austin does ; they hold that God by his Spirit does, at the time of baptism, seal and apply to the infant that is there dedicated to him the promises of the covenant of which he is capable, viz : adoption, pardon of sin, translation from the state of nature to that of grace, etc. ; on which account the infant is said to be regenerated of (or by) the Spirit. Not that God does by any miracle at that time illuminate or convert the mind of the child. And for original sin, or the corruption of our nature, they hold that God by his covenant does abolish the guilt of it, receives the child to his mercy in Christ, and consigns to him by promise, such grace as shall afterward, by the use of means, if he live, be sufficient to keep it under, but not wholly extirpate it in this life. It is left as the subject of trial, and of a continual Christian warfare. And this is the opinion of St. Austin, and of the ancients generally.” See vol. 1, ch. 15.

### *Doctrine of the Episcopal Church in this country.*

There is no special exposition of the views of the Church on this subject set forth by the general convention. The nearest approach to this, is to be found in the explanation of the Church Catechism, published by the Episcopal Sunday School Union, and most generally adopted throughout the church. By referring to that catechism, it will be seen that the church is far from ascribing to the ordinance of baptism all that some suppose. It says “ that baptism is called the washing of regeneration, because we are thereby born into a state of grace and salvation,” which it explains to be “ a state in which, in God’s church, we enjoy the means of being freed from sin, and a *title* to eternal happiness.” But then



it proceeds to say, "that in order to pass out of this state of grace or salvation, or kingdom of God on earth, into the state of glory, we must become new creatures;" thereby declaring, that another change beside that which takes place at baptism, must pass on our souls before we can be saved." In answer to the question "what is meant by our being made children of grace in baptism," it is said, "as children of grace we enjoy a *title* to that immortality which was forfeited in Adam," and "that we enjoy through Christ, and by his Holy Spirit, the means and the promises of deliverance from the power of original corruption, and from the consequences of actual sins—the present and everlasting displeasure of God."

If the sentiments of the Bishops of the Church at any given time, and the same so far sanctioned by the house of clerical and lay delegates, as to be laid before the whole church for consideration is worthy of respect, that can also be furnished in the support of the above.

In the year 1836 certain changes were proposed by the house of Bishops as to the reading of the service and lessons, and together with them the following is found, concerning a prayer in the confirmation service: "And to correct the injurious misapprehension, as to the meaning of certain terms, in the first collect in the office of confirmation, the Bishops *unanimously* propose the following resolution: *Resolved*, That after the first collect in the office of confirmation, the following be inserted, to be used at the discretion of the Bishop, instead of the first collect: "Almighty and ever living God, who hast vouchsafed in baptism to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, *thus giving them a title* to all the blessings of thy covenant of *mercy in thy son Jesus Christ, etc.*"

By turning to the Confirmation service, we find that the prayer for which this may be substituted reads thus: "Almighty and ever living God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins," &c. It will be perceived that the words, "thus giving them a title to all the blessings of thy covenant of mercy in Christ Jesus," are additional, and evidently explanatory, designed to fix the

meaning of the words "regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost," which are used in the baptismal service, and repeated in the confirmation service, but without explanation. This addition would have answered the same purpose as the 27th article, with whose doctrine it coincides. That teaches that baptism is the seal of adoption; this, that it is a conditional title to salvation. As the adoption did not necessarily alter the nature of the child, and might prove unavailing, so the title gave no new nature, and might be forfeited by a failure on the part of the baptized to fulfil his part in the engagement. It will be seen that the bishops, in proposing this change, urge as a reason that it was to "correct injurious misapprehensions as to the meaning of certain terms." Now, what could this be, but some high views of a moral change effected in baptism, which are often imputed to our Church, and which seem to be expressed by [the term, regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost. Of this the author entertains not the shadow of a doubt.\*

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\* *On the design of the proposed substitute.*—That such was the object in the proposed substitute, may be inferred from the fact that it was proposed by Bishop Hobart, and exactly corresponds with his sentiments as set forth in his explanation of the Catechism, and more fully enlarged on in his tract on Confirmation; both of which documents have been generally received by the Church as expressing her views. But the matter is placed beyond doubt by the following extract from a private letter of Bishop Hobart, addressed to myself and a particular friend. "The expressions in the prayer are liable to be misunderstood, and create serious objections on the part of many, I have found, to using the ordinance. The object of the proposed prayer was not to relinquish the expression of regeneration, as applied to baptism, but to guard against the misconstruction that would make this synonymous with renovation, sanctification, conversion, or any other term by which the renewing of the Holy Ghost might be denoted." It appears, then, that the object of the house of Bishops in proposing it, and of the other house in acceding to it, was to fix the meaning of this passage, and to declare that other meanings considered injurious to the Church were not correctly ascribed to her.

This proposition was connected with sundry others relative to the abridgment of the Liturgy, which excited uneasiness in the minds of many who feared any thing like innovation, and therefore the whole was withdrawn at the next General Convention, though the author does not remember, or believe, that any objection was made to this alteration. What occurred, however, was sufficient to show the general sense of the Church on the subject: What was thus proposed by the bishops and

The next document which we shall adduce, is a report on the subject of education to the General Convention of 1841, by a committee appointed in the previous Convention of 1838, "to take into consideration the subject of the Christian education of the youth of both sexes, in accordance with the principles of the Church." Being referred to a committee of the house of Bishops and approved, it was, by a joint vote of both houses of Convention, "referred to the Executive Committee of the Board of Managers of the Sunday School Union of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to be printed and distributed," which was accordingly done.

The following extracts will show its general character :

The depravity of our nature is the great point insisted on. "In the subject of education she does not see an infant angel, but a child of fallen man going astray from the womb. For an emblem of the unfolding of man's moral nature, the Church does not look to the oak, which, as soon as it has left its germ, begins to expand its sturdy trunk, as by an inherent

clergy at that convention, was afterwards spoken of by Bishop Griswold in one of his sermons, shewing the difference between regeneration, as used by the Church, and renovation. After explaining and justifying the doctrine of the Church, he remarks, "In the present state of religion, there is, we have observed, some confusion in the use of theological terms. Christians hear them, every one in his own language, and in the tongue wherein he was born. This makes it necessary for us frequently to make these explanations. An alteration in some few expressions in our Liturgy would make these explanations less necessary, and would remove one great obstacle to the success of our labors. But till such alteration, by the permission of God and the wisdom of his Church, shall be made, let us be careful rightly to understand her language, and to embrace her sound scriptural doctrine."

One word is added as to the opinion of Bishop White. Although he contends most strenuously for the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and would have that word applied only to baptism, and is very strong in his affirmation that the grace of baptism may, if used, render unnecessary that deep repentance for which we contend, and is entirely opposed to the doctrine of sensible conversions, and objects to the use of the word conversion as to the baptized, yet still declares that "no considerate person supposes that in infant baptism any moral change is wrought in the mind of an infant," and speaks of some who regard "regeneration as a species of mechanical operation on a being without ideas, and incapable of the exercise of the intellectual faculty." See his work on the Catechism, p. 214—222. The necessity of baptism, in order to the salvation of those dying in infancy, he utterly rejects.

power, and to rear its head aloft, as though its sympathies and its alliances were with the Heavens; but to the vine, the degenerate plant of a strange vine, which has no sooner burst its seed, than it begins to droop its head and shew its earthward tendency, and can mount upward only as some object is kindly interposed to which it may cling, and by which it may ascend." By bringing this sinful child and entering it into the Church of Christ, "he acquires a claim, a covenanted claim, to those great and precious promises, whereby we become partakers of the divine nature. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose sacred name he was baptized, is pledged to bestow his blessing on the means used for his improvement. The Church recognising his adoption, commits him to the care of suitable teachers, and assigns to him his lessons." "A sinner has not taken the first step in the salvation of his own soul till he has come to Christ. All his future goings depend on that; it is the germ of his Christian life." "Now the office of a parent for the passive babe committed to his charge, is precisely that of a sinner for his own soul." "The mode of bringing a soul to Christ is two-fold: the first in order is, by exercising a true faith in prayer to God in his behalf immediately on his birth, yea, even before his birth. But this is not all. There is still another way—a more visible way—of exercising the same faith and the same prayer unto the same great end, which the parent must observe, if he would fulfill all righteousness. Every sinner who truly repents and unfeignedly believes in Jesus Christ unto salvation has come to Christ; but there is a visible act, an outward expression of faith and repentance and obedience, in which, according to his master's law, he is to come to him, and before men to confess to him. His faith and obedience are both defective until he has done that. That act is baptism. By baptism he puts on Christ professedly, as by faith he puts on Christ spiritually. He is baptized into Christ." "So when the Christian parent would fully bring his child to Christ, besides doing it in the spirit, he must do it also in the outward act." Baptism is "placing the little one immediately in the nursery of the Lord—into fellowship with the family of his people—surrounding him with all the means of grace; binding



him by solemn covenant with God to live as becometh the Gospel; receiving in his behalf every prayer that any believer may offer up for the Church of God." The report dwells much on the duty of seeking, by means of a religious education, the earliest possible piety in the child. Some of the last sentences just quoted from the report, are taken from the preface of Bishop McIlvaine to a volume of sermons by English divines. In that preface, of which we purpose to make further and larger use in another chapter, the duty of seeking, by the means of faithful religious training, in reliance on the Divine blessing, the earliest possible piety, is most impressively set forth. Of course it need not be stated that he did not ground this duty and hope on the belief of a moral change wrought in the child at baptism, nothing being more contrary to the well known sentiments of that writer. The extracts, however, will serve to shew, that those who reject the assumption of the fact of such moral renovation, are not on that account the less zealous in urging an early attention to the souls of children, on the ground of a firm belief of their capability of receiving benefit thereby.

The author would also take the liberty of referring to a treatise of his own, published fifteen years ago, and republished four or five times since, in which he set forth the same views advocated now. He is particularly induced to this, from the fact that the treatise, in an abridged form, has been adopted by one of the largest tract societies in our Church,\* as setting forth the true doctrines of the Church. As this chapter is employed in shewing, as accurately as can be ascertained, the general sentiments of the Church hitherto, he will introduce some passages from it. The treatise referred to is one on Confirmation. In it the following passages may be found: "Our Church never lets go her hold on her baptized children—never willingly—never, but through the unfaithfulness of sponsors, parents, or ministers, or the perverseness of children when they come to age. It is not her doctrine—let them be baptized, then turned adrift on the wide world, and regarded even as the children of foreigners and strangers—perchance at some future day they may flee to

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\*The Protestant Episcopal Tract Society located in New York.

the ark of safety. It says to those who undertake for them, bring up these little ones, not as the children of a king, but as the adopted and beloved children of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Shew them tenderness and reverence as those for whom a Savior died, and who may one day be angels of light in the kingdom of glory." "We must keep our eyes and our hearts ever upon them; we must watch each opening faculty and budding affection, and seek to train them towards Heaven." "Holy indeed is the relation which God has established between parents and their children. Great is the influence which he has given the former over the latter, and great must be the guilt of neglecting to use it. There is a docility and credulity implanted in the minds of the young, which inclines them to receive, believe, and do, whatever shall be taught them by those to whom Providence has entrusted their education. And woe be to those who shall neglect to make the best use of this wise and gracious constitution of their nature." "The Church seeks to do her part. At baptism she solemnly dedicates them to God; then confides them to the arms of parents, or other suitable persons, to be trained up for Heaven, with most positive injunction to do their parts faithfully. In confirmation, she sends one of her chief ministers to see how those duties have been performed, and what has been the fruit thereof. As to the children, the Bishop thus speaks: This rite of the Church is designed to speak in the most emphatic language to the young, and tell them that God expects them to seek him early, and promised that they shall find him. There is to each one of us a fearfully interesting period when responsibility begins. We know not what that period is, and our ignorance of it ought to make the young most anxious to enter into God's service at the very first moment they are capable of it. I come this day, not to call upon those who have reached, not the age of fourteen, of thirteen, of ten, or of any lesser age, to give themselves to the service of God—for I dare not specify any age, lest God should have appointed an earlier, and lest I should encourage any to put off this first of duties a moment beyond the time when it becomes practicable, and when God demands it. I come to say to all, however young, who are capable of understand-

ing our holy religion, that it is their duty to embrace it heartily, and that every moment's delay is danger and crime. My dear young friends, when you find that your minds are capable of understanding, and your hearts of loving so many things here below, ought you not to tremble when you find that you do not understand and love the best of all things? Many at an early age have become truly pious, and truly happy in their piety; and should not this make you very fearful, lest if death now seize you, your immortal souls should be lost forever?" On the subject of baptism being a means of grace, it says: "Who shall say how, even at some distant day, according to the economy of grace, the faithful dedication of him to God, his baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the fervent prayers offered up, the pious instruction delivered in his early years, may have contributed to his late conversion; and will he not take pleasure in reverting to these holy exercises? The times and the seasons, and the hearts of men, are in the hands of God, and he can and does make the prayers of the faithful, and the instructions of the pious, effectual just when and how he pleases; and that which appears to be lost is often found, though after many days. I find that some of the most eminently wise and pious have ever been disposed to ascribe their conversion, which took place at a later period, to the revival of some impression made on their almost infant mind by the instruction of pious parents, or else have considered it as the answer to prayers long since offered, and now made effectual. Nor can I, in this, see any thing either unreasonable or unscriptural."

In another tract—on religious education—the author thus expressed the same sentiment: "The seed sown in the heart of a child may lie long without vegetating, and yet without perishing." "Why may not the word of truth, deposited in the mind at an early period, and remembered and thought upon afterward, be the means of conversion, as well as that heard at a later period?"

This chapter will be concluded, by referring to some extracts in an address of the author to the convention in 1844, in which it was shewn, that the other churches of the Reformation, in their Confessions of Faith, used the same terms

in speaking of baptism with those which are objected to in our services. "Archbishop Tillotson speaks of the prayers in those churches, in their offices for baptism, saying that the language used is the same with ours, and that we need not scruple to use what is provided in our own. But then he utterly condemns those extravagant meanings that are given to the words objected to; for he says that the Church, in saying that the children are regenerated in baptism, means that, by entering into this covenant, they are put into a state and capacity of all the blessings of the Gospel, if they do not neglect the conditions which that covenant requires on their part." Such is the very view presented by the documents of our church in this country, which have been adduced above.



## CHAPTER VII.

### *On sponsors, and the interrogatories in baptism.*

In the foregoing treatise we have presented it as a leading idea or principle, that the children of Christians are children of promise, of many and precious promises, by receiving which they may become partakers of a divine nature, escaping the corruption of this world through lust. That these promises, made generally to all before they began to exist, are of course really theirs as soon as they have any being; that they are signed and sealed to each one in baptism; that, as the apostle said, if any one of the parents were believers, their children were holy—that is, had a right to be entered into the church in order to become holy in the highest sense; that therefore, all children born of Christian parents have a right to baptism, the promise being to Abraham and his seed, and to the converts on the day of Pentecost and their seed. This is not a principle peculiar to us as Christians. It runs through the whole economy of God's appointments for man—belongs to the very constitution of our nature. Children, originally a part of their parents, afterwards properly called bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, are for a long time most dependent on them—the most helpless and dependent of all animals on earth—have always under every dispensation, human or divine, been made subject to the will of parents, who had a right to act for them, and choose for them, and contract for them, as might seem best for their temporal or spiritual interests. These are rights which parents have over their children, in acting for them, even as over themselves. These are privileges also, which children have by reason of their birth, of which no man should deprive them. They have always been secured to them by the laws and usages of every age and country. The privilege of church membership, and the inheritance of God's promises, are secured by God himself to the children of Christians now, as they once were to the children of the Jews. Whatever sign or token of this may have been appointed, is

theirs also. But here a question arises which has caused some difference of sentiment. What constitutes children the children of promise, entitling them to be enrolled among the people of God. Is real piety in one or both of the parents required in order to this ; and if this be wanting, must the children be deprived of the seal of the covenant ? Must they though in a Christian land be, as it were, out of the Church of God, until and unless at a future period they seek admission for themselves ? On seeking the will of God on this point in his word, we find that provision was made not only for the children of the Jews, but also for servants bought with money, and strangers—that is, persons of other countries, coming in among them, and placed in circumstances favorable for the acquirement of truth ; that these also might be admitted into covenant ; that Abraham circumcised his whole household of servants and their little ones. We have also seen what was the understanding and practice of the Jews on the subject ; that they allowed any pious and charitable persons to adopt the children of the heathen, or such as were orphans among them, and to enter them into covenant ; they also permitted the court or consistory, composed of grave persons, to have this done for any such children,—of course, making it a condition that they be trained up in the Jewish faith, that being the great object of the appointed rite of initiation. The advantages of such a provision are obvious. The same course was adopted by the Christian Church from the first. All children born of parents professing to believe in the Christian religion, whether truly pious or not—a point impossible often times to be ascertained—all born amongst Christians, so that they might be brought up in the Christian faith, were considered as proper subjects for baptism. If their parents were not truly pious, or even not believers, they might have grandfathers or grandmothers, or other near relatives who were, and who were chiefly interested for these children ; and if the parents were willing, who would deny this privilege to the children and those who would undertake for their religious instruction ? Moreover, it was ever considered that the whole church—the faithful—were considered as the mother of all children born in her bosom, or of such as might be placed under her care, just as the

children born in Greece or Rome were considered as children of those republics, and were subject to the laws they made for them.

Thus St. Austin says: "For infants are offered, not so much by those in whose hands they are brought, (though by those, too, if they be good, faithful Christians,) as by the whole congregation of faithful men; for they are rightly said to be offered by all those whose desire it is that they should be offered, or by whose united charity they are assisted towards the communication of the Holy Spirit. So that the whole Church of the Saints does this office as a mother. For the whole Church brings forth all her children, and the whole brings forth each particular." Again. "Whereas you see that a great many are offered, not by their parents, but by any other persons, as the infant slaves are sometimes offered by their masters. And sometimes, when the parents are dead, the infants are baptized, being offered by any who can afford to shew this compassion on them. And sometimes infants, whom parents have cruelly exposed to be brought up by those that light on them, are now and then taken up by the holy virgins, and offered to baptism by those who have no children of their own, nor design to have any. And in all this there is nothing else done than what is written in the Gospel, when our Lord asked, who was neighbor to him that was wounded by thieves, and left half dead in the road? And it was answered, he that had mercy on him." The Church, therefore, adopts the children presented to God in baptism. And here we see one of the reasons why she requires it to be done in the congregation, because it is a joint act of the faithful, and should be done with united prayer. God only commands the ordinance, and says in whose name it must be done, and with what object in view, leaving the Church to see that it be performed in a proper manner, as to prayers and the persons who take a prominent part in it. In the Jewish Church grave persons were chosen, whether parents or others, who presented the children; and at the time there was set forth the true nature of the transaction—what it looked forward to. Solemn promises were also required in behalf of the recipient of the rite. So it was in the Christian Church. And it was most impor-

tant that such an exhibition of the design of the ordinance should be made, showing that its efficacy depended on the right use made of it in after years.\* Otherwise it might have been supposed, that all was done in a moment by the very act, and as by magic. Notwithstanding all the provisions to the contrary, supersition and ignorance have too often regarded it in that light.

It will be perceived from the foregoing remarks, that we highly esteem that arrangement in our Church which admits the baptism of all children as children of the Church, (even though their parents be unsuitable to present them,) when proper persons are appointed for the purpose. It is the duty of the Church not merely to see that pious ministers be provided for receiving them, but pious persons for presenting them—the parents, if such, always to be preferred. The propriety of this is most evident, from the questions propounded to the child, and which must be answered by its representative. I need not dwell on the inconsistency of appointing persons to utter such solemn answers who neither feel nor believe, and of enjoining it on them to see that these children be trained up according to those principles and precepts which they themselves neither believe nor heed. Even earthly courts, in choosing guardians for orphan children, feel bound to have reference to such qualities as will pro-

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\* St. Paul, in answer to the question supposed to be put to him, “what advantage, then, hath the Jew, or what profit is there in circumcision?” replies, “much every way. *Chiefly* because unto them are committed the lively oracles of God.” This is the chief blessing, because it is the instrument chiefly used by the Spirit for the salvation of man. Thus at circumcision, the Jews blessed God for sanctifying them with the commandants. Thus David said, “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Thus our Lord said, “sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” Thus the Church, in the communion service, prays God to bless and sanctify the elements with the word as well as Spirit. Thus one of the Jewish Rabbis says, “beloved are Israel, in that they are called the children of God.” And it was an additional love that acquainted them with their being actually called the children of God. As it is said, “ye are the children of the Lord your God.” “Beloved are Israel, to whom was given that delectable instrument wherewith (that is, according to which) the world was created;” alluding to the wisdom, the good doctrine of which Solomon speaks, and which is to be found in God’s word.



mote the best interests of the children. Sometimes, indeed, these courts exercise the right of taking children out of the hands of unworthy parents and guardians, and appointing others in their stead.\*

### *The Interrogatories.*

And this brings me to the second point proposed to be considered in this chapter, viz : the interrogatories to children. There has always been some difference of opinion as to the expediency of this part of our baptismal service. Some of the Reformers themselves were doubtful about it, perhaps opposed to it, and hoped it would one day be abolished. The Puritans were much opposed to it, and made efforts, at different times, for its removal. It was alleged to be contrary to fact—to be a mere fiction, and ought not to be admitted into so grave a service—that children, who were unconscious of any thing which was said, were addressed even as men, and supposed to answer through their sponsors, and promise what many would never perform.

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\* Among the Jews, when a male child was born, it was customary for a God-father to be chosen from amongst his relations or friends, if they were able to incur the expenses, which consisted in presents and a rich breakfast. As to the poor, they either got rich persons to be sponsors, or else applied to a society, which appointed one of their number to become such, and appropriated a certain sum of money for presents and a breakfast. No doubt this custom was much abused, and laid the foundation for a similar practice at the baptism of Christian children. As soon as the God-father entered the Synagogue with the child, the congregation cried out "Blessed is he that cometh to be circumcised, and enter into the covenant on the eighth day." During the performance of the ceremony, the person officiating says, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hath sanctified us with his commandants, and commanded us circumcision." The expression, "sanctified us with his commandments," is a very common one in their religious services. Again he says, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hath sanctified his beloved from the womb, and ordained an ordinance for his kindred, and sealed his descendants with the mark of his holy covenant." Again: "Let the father rejoice in them that go forth from his loins, and let the mother be glad in the fruit of her womb." And again: "I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood, and I said unto thee, in thy blood shalt thou live." Again: "This little one, may he live to be great; and as he hath entered into the covenant, so may he enter into the law, the canopy, and good deeds."

This difficulty did not first arise at the Reformation. We read of it in the early ages, where the same method prevailed. At that time, indeed, it was expressed in a more imposing manner; whereas, now, it is asked, "Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works?" etc.; then, it was asked, "Does this child renounce?" "Does this child believe?" and so on. The answer in each case was, "He does."

This appeared then, as now, strange and improper to some. A bishop, by the name of Boniface, addresses a letter to the celebrated St. Austin, on this subject, stating the difficulty thus: "Suppose I set before you an infant, and ask you whether, when he grows up, he will be a chaste man, or whether he will be a thief. Your answer, doubtless, will be, I cannot tell. And whether he, in that infant age, have any good or evil thought. You will say, I know not. Since, therefore, you dare not say any thing concerning his future behaviour, or his present thoughts, what is the meaning, that when they are brought to baptism, their parents, as sponsors for them, make answer and say, that they do that which that age can have no thoughts of, or, if they have, nobody knows what they are? For we ask those by whom they are brought, and say, does he believe in God? Concerning that age which has no knowledge whether there be a God or not, they answer, he does believe. And so, in like manner, answer is made to all the rest. So that I wonder how the parents do, in those matters, answer so confidently for the child, that he does this or that, which the baptizer demands at his baptism. And yet if, at the same time, I ask, will this baptized person prove chaste, or not prove a thief, I question whether any one dare so answer he will or will not be such or such an one; as they answer, without any hesitation, that he does believe in God—that he does turn to God."

To this St. Austin thus replies: "You know we often express ourselves so, as that when Good Friday is nigh, we say, to-morrow, or next day, is our Lord's passion, though it be a great many years ago since that he suffered, and his passion never was performed but once. So on the Lord's day. This day our Lord arose, though since he arose it be

so many years. Why is there no one so silly as to say we lie, when we so speak? but for this reason, because we give names to those days from the representation they make us of those on which the things were indeed done; so, as that is called the very day which is not the very day, but answers to it in the revolution of time; and that which is not on that day, but was done a long time, is spoken of as done on that day, because the sacrament (that is, sign) of it is then celebrated. Was not Christ, in his own person, offered up (or sacrificed) once for all? And yet, in the sacrament, he is offered in the church, (or in, or to, or among the people,) not only every Easter, but every day; nor does he lie who, being asked, says he is offered. For sacraments would not be sacraments, if they had not a resemblance of those things whereof they are sacraments; and from this resemblance they commonly have the names of the things themselves. As, therefore, the sacrament of Christ's body is, after a certain fashion, Christ's body, and the sacrament of Christ's blood is Christ's blood, so the sacrament of faith (so baptism was called, because faith was required) is faith, and to believe is nothing but to have faith. And so, when an infant, who has not yet the faculty of faith, is said to believe, he is said to have faith because of the sacrament of faith, and to turn to God, because of the sacrament of conversion, (another name applied to baptism,) because that answer belongs to the celebration of the sacrament. So the Apostle, on the same subject of baptism, says, 'We are buried with Christ by baptism unto death;' he does not say we signify a burial, but he uses the word itself—we are buried.\* So that he calls the sacrament of so great a thing by

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\*There are some figurative expressions used in the scriptures, and introduced into our baptismal services, which, except understood by a reference to the facts from which they are drawn, are apt to confuse the mind. I mean those of being baptized into the death of Christ; being planted in the likeness of his death; being grafted into the body of Christ's church; being buried with him in baptism.

A learned writer (Taylor on Baptism) has given, we think, the most satisfactory explanation of them. He says, that when St. Paul speaks of our bodies being washed with pure water, and St. Peter of the washing away of the filth of the flesh, both of these in connexion with baptism, they speak of that part of the ceremony of baptism which in those

the name of the thing itself. So an infant, though he be not yet constituted a fidel (that is, a faithful Christian) by that faith which consists in the will of believers, yet he is, by the sacrament of that faith; for as he is said to believe, so is he called a fidel, not from his having the thing in itself in his mind, but from his receiving the sacrament of it. And when a person begins to have a sense of things, he does not repeat that sacrament, but understands the force of it; and by consent of will squares himself to the true meaning of it. And till he can do this, the sacrament will avail to his preservation against all contrary powers; and so far will it

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days preceded the solemn act of the minister's pouring water on the candidate in the name of the Trinity; they spoke of something more thorough as to the purifying of the body, performed either by the persons themselves, or others, whether in a large vessel or running stream, and refers to the custom which has ever existed of washing dead bodies before their interment, and then wrapping them in white garments. This was being "baptized for the dead," as St. Paul says. Our Saviour, covered with his own blood, was thus washed, and then clad with white linen clothes. This was a part of what was called the burial or funeral ceremony. They who were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death. They were washed, as if they were dead persons. They professed thereby to die unto sin, as dead men die to the things of this life; and to rise again to newness of life, as Christ rose from the dead on the third day. So are we to understand the terms crucified with Christ; as he became dead in his body to all earthly things, so they must crucify the old man, and continually mortify their members. The Apostle bids those who had been baptized into Christ's death to reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God, through Christ. In answer to the slanderous charge brought against them, that they held the abominable doctrine of doing evil that good might come, of sinning that grace might abound, he says, God forbid; how shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?—that is, how can we, who profess in baptism to be dead to sin, live purposely and professedly in sin, as we are charged, in the hope of abounding grace, maintaining a doctrine so contrary to our profession and our principles.

To put off the old man and to put on the new man, or to put on Christ, is another figure also in connexion with baptism, and most probably refers to the tearing away the old garments from the dead person, and putting on the new white garment in which the dead are clothed. Being planted in the likeness of his death, is supposed to refer to the practice of grafting, by which a branch is cut off from some tree, renouncing all connexion with it, dead to it, planted or grafted into another stock, from which it receives life, and rises again into a new existence, bearing more abundant fruit. So shall we resemble Christ, both in his death and resurrection.



avail, that if he depart this life before the use of reason, he will, by this Christian remedy of the sacrament itself, (the charity of the church recommending him,) be made free from that condemnation which by one man entered into the world."

In these last words we see the high view he had of the power of baptism; for he was one who believed that infants were lost without it, although he disbelieved any present effect on the mind of the infant. Whether the foregoing explanation was satisfactory to the enquirer, or has been so to others since his day, it is certain from it, and other writings of St. Austin, that he entirely rejected the doctrine of the sacraments, as held in the church of Rome, and by some sympathizing with her, whereby the sign and the thing signified are confounded together. He recognises no principle of faith, as existing in the child at its coming to baptism, or being imparted to it by baptism. That was something yet to come.

It appears, then, that as now, so of old, among the Jews and the early Christians, the hypothetical principle, or the principle of anticipation, if I may so call it, prevailed in their initiation of children into the church. The church, cherishing the hope that by God's blessing on the means used they would surely come to that faith and repentance, of which baptism is a sign and seal, grants to them before hand the same sign and seal, and addresses them as though they had already obtained the same blessing. Some there are, who carry this hypothetical principle yet farther, and understanding the term regeneration as used in our baptismal service, only in its higher sense as signifying a moral change, suppose that the church, still retaining the principle, goes forward to the age of discretion, and on the supposition and the condition that the child fulfils its promises, thanks God that it has pleased him to regenerate the same by his Holy Spirit. The church might indeed have extended the principle thus far, and only been liable to the same complaint now made against her, for the admission of it into the service; but as may be seen in the foregoing treatise, we do not think she has so extended it, but using the word regeneration in another sense from that now generally attached to it, thanks

God for something actually bestowed in baptism—that is, union with the church or body of Christ, and a seal of the promises of God—the promises of redemption through Christ, and sanctification by the Spirit.

As to the wisdom and advantage of the interrogatories, without denying that there is something satisfactory in the explanation of St. Austin, we think a better justification of this may be derived from the common practice of mankind in relation to contracts for children, by guardians and others acting for them. One of our American bishops has very happily illustrated and defended it in the following manner :\*

“Take, for example, the common case where orphans or destitute children are bound to a master or mistress by the overseers of the poor. The indenture by which this is done is an instrument of writing, containing a mutual agreement, in which the infant promises obedience, faithfulness and industry, and the master or mistress promises to feed, clothe, instruct, and provide for the infant. Now, in this case every man who has seen such an instrument knows, that the overseers undertake the duties to be performed by the child, and sign their names for him, and on his behalf; and yet no one ever supposed that this signing makes them accountable in their own persons—because the duties belong to the infant, the whole transaction is for his benefit, and the law holds him bound to fulfil his part of the contract as soon as he is able to understand it, and punishes him if he refuses to obey. The same principle occurs when parents bind their own children as apprentices. They undertake for, and in the name of their sons, all the duties which belong to that part of the covenant; and if their children fail to perform them, the parents are never held personally liable, for the same reason, because it is the children’s contract and not the parents’, although the parents sign it in their name.

Nor is this principle of law confined to these cases alone. On the contrary, it applies to every other transaction of importance, in which the interests of children are involved. Thus a father, desirous of leaving an estate to a son, appoints

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\*Bishop Hopkins, of Vermont.

guardians by his will ; or, if there be no will appointing guardians, the courts of law will appoint such as the judges think proper, and all the business of the infant must be conducted through his legal representatives until he come of age. These guardians buy and sell, lease and release, pay and receive ; and all their acts, if legally done, bind the infant on the very same ground—the law allowing them to act for the child's benefit, because he has not understanding enough to act for himself. Here then we see an universal principle of law, which has never yet been called an absurdity, but admitted by all reflecting men to be reasonable, just, and necessary. And in no case can it operate with greater force, than in the solemn covenant on which is founded the ordinance of baptism ; for no covenant can be more perfectly conditional than the covenant of salvation. The Lord indeed grants to the infant the privilege of adoption forthwith ; accepting on his behalf the repentance and faith of those who present him, which suffices until he is able to fulfil the appointed duties of his profession in his own person. All this, however, is on the express condition, that he will be faithful and obedient in due time ; for if he be not, baptism will not save him, but he will be cast out of his Heavenly Father's favor, disinherited, and his spiritual birth-right will be forfeited forever. Where then is the absurdity of sponsors in infant baptism ? What arrangement could set before our eyes, more clearly or more strongly, the indispensable conditions, on our performance of which the assurance of an immortal inheritance depends ? And how, I beseech ye, could the church more carefully provide for the piety of her children, than by thus connecting with the very ordinance of their initiation the terms of the covenant which these sponsors promised on their behalf, and which it was to be their first duty and their highest interest faithfully to fulfil ?”\*

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\* The Church, in granting baptism to infants, believing it to be God's will, and yet desiring to do it in such a manner as to set forth the absolute necessity of faith and repentance unto salvation, has only acted, as is often done in many earthly transactions, where a certain property is sold, a privilege granted, for a certain price, on a certain condition ; but the price not being in hand to pay down, or the condition impracticable at present, a promissory note, endorsed by some friend perhaps, is given ;

Having thus given the history and design of the interrogatories made to children, I would say of them, and of the term regeneration, that the Church doubtless might set forth her true meaning and object in the use of them, in other language less liable now to be misunderstood ; but, as she has not deemed it expedient to change old forms and words, so as to keep pace with the variations of language, it becomes the duty of all her members, especially her ministers, carefully to find out her true intentions, and explain the same to others. In the very obscurity of them, and their liability to be misunderstood, there may be found the same advantage, as in the parables of Scripture, that, requiring to be studied with an earnest desire to find out their true meaning, they thereby, when understood, make a deeper impression than if expressed in more common terms. As to the term regeneration, since our Lord and St. Paul borrowed it from the common language of the Jews, and not from the Old Testament, we ought not to object to its use, provided we do not misunderstand and misapply it. And, as to the questions addressed to children at their baptism, demanding something which they cannot then perform, although there appears something strange, and even false in it, yet a more effectual method could not have been adopted whereby to show that the Church does not regard baptism as of the nature of a charm, or a miraculous operation, producing an effect without the co-operation of the recipient, and due qualifications of heart ; seeing that she will not even baptize infants without requiring a solemn promise of that faith and repentance which she says belong to baptism, and are necessary for its due efficacy. The only difference which she makes between adults and infants is, that of the one she demands a

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and, on the strength of that promissory note, sometimes the property is surrendered, and it may be a receipt given, as if the money had been paid. The promissory note is all the assurance the creditor has of payment ; but yet, if that is not paid according to law, the property or privilege may be withdrawn, and sold for the payment of the note. So in the baptism of infants, although the baptism would be valid without it, yet the Church requires a promise of the fulfilment of those things, without which baptism would be of no avail, thinking that the promise might the more move them to the performance of that vow.



previous possession of these qualifications, while she allows to the other, by reason of their tender age, due time for the attainment. Like a generous creditor, she has patience with the child until it can pay all the debt. But, if the child fail to fulfil its part, then the baptism will be of no more avail than to the hypocritical adult, but will only be to its greater condemnation. There is another use which may lawfully be made of that feature in our service which requires positive promises of the children through their sponsors, which, however, I reserve for the commencement of the concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Practical improvement of the foregoing, with prayers and meditations before and after the baptism of children.*

I proposed to open this with the mention of another use which may lawfully be made of the positive promise of the sponsors in the name of the children. Although it is evident that the promise is that of the child, not of the sponsor, the voice of the sponsor only being used, yet, when we consider the connexion established by God himself between infant membership and religious education, how parents and others presenting them are expected and enjoined to believe and feel the things promised by children, how solemnly they are commanded in Scripture and by the Church to teach these things to the children; when we remember the precept to train up children in the way they should go, and the promise that when they are old they will not depart from it; when we remember the immense power of pious parents and guardians over children, how the children will believe almost any thing told them by parents, and may be made to do almost every thing they are commanded; when we see throughout the whole world children adopting the religious faith of their parents, may we not believe, that the Church, in this peculiar mode of receiving children, meant to express this immense influence of parents and others over children, and to let them see, that if they would only be faithful to their duty, they might fully expect that, with God's blessing, these children would not fail to realize the hopes and expectations of those presenting them. A more emphatic method of setting forth the faith of the Church in the power of religious education could not be devised than we find in these interrogatories. And in them also we may see the true character of that education which they are to endeavor to give to the children entrusted to their care. As to that, I shall offer as far better than any thing of my own a part of that report, alluded to before, which, coming with the

sanction of the Church, will I hope have the weight which it deserves on the minds of all her members.\*

“Let us proceed, then, with the case of parents who are now supposed to have brought their offspring to Christ in the sacrament of baptism, and in the spirit we have described. What is now to be done? Nurture in the Lord has commenced. How is it to be carried on?

“Understand, and fully recognise, the relative state of that baptized child. *He is a member of the Church of Christ*, because ‘baptized into Christ,’ and because he has thus ‘put on Christ.’ The Church is the Lord’s family. It includes the babes, and those of full age—some confined to the limitations of the nursery—others, by reason of growth, allowed all the privileges and liberties of the whole house; but all members alike of the same family. But connected with church membership are necessarily a certain profession and responsibility. They may be assumed personally, or by a lawfully authorized substitute. As when, of old time, parents stood for and with their children, in that covenant transaction wherein the people of Israel solemnly took the Lord for their God, and he took them for his peculiar people; so, in the present case, the parents of the child, being his divinely authorized guardians, covenanted and professed in his name; and, whether words to this effect were used or not, and however the ordinance may have been administered, the obligation entered into by that child, in such transaction, contained necessarily the renunciation of the world and of all sin, and the adoption of the whole will of God. So that the relation of a baptized child to the world, to the Church, and to God, as to spiritual duty, in proportion as he becomes capable of understanding and performing it, is precisely that of any other member of the Church of Christ. His profession, represented and made in baptism, is ‘to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt af-

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\* This part was from the pen of Bishop McIlvaine, who was one of the committee for drawing it up.

fections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.'

"Now, let the parent remember always, and be regulated in every thing by the remembrance, that such is the profession he has chosen for his child, and to which, as his spiritual guardian, he has solemnly and irrevocably committed him. He had a right to do so. It was his duty to it. It was for the child's best interest that it should be done. But let that parent fully and deeply realize the position in which he has placed the child, and consequently his own responsibility for all that a heart of prayer and a hand of diligence can do, to bring it to good effect. Now, all his efforts must be based upon, and shaped according to, that relation and profession. The child is a member of the Church; his training must be as becometh such a connection. Nothing that would be inconsistent with the essential spirit of a member of the Church of any age must be allowed in it. We say the essential spirit, because, in many things which are not wrong in themselves, a difference of age makes an entire difference of propriety. An innocent playfulness of the child, consistent with the sweetest spirit of piety, would be folly, and levity, and time wasting in the man.

"We are dealing now with a main principle, obvious, indeed, but probably as often forgotten and neglected, or not understood, as any thing else in this whole matter. We venture to say, that, however the relation and responsibility of baptized children as Church members may be acknowledged in every one's catechism, it is for the most part overlooked and neglected, or far from having its legitimate control in their practical training. The fact that they are espoused to the Lord, that they belong to his Church, are in covenant for a holy life, and solemnly bound, by the baptismal profession, to live as becometh the gospel, is not, as it should be, the great principle on which to determine what is proper or improper in the things to be taught them, in the indulgences to be allowed them, in the purposes for which to educate, or the companions with which to associate them. Many a parent, were his son a communicant, would at once perceive the inconsistency of his partaking in what he encourages, or at least cheerfully tolerates, while he is



*only baptized*; as if communion involved the duty of any more spiritual character than baptism. Let parents see that in such things they 'walk circumspectly.' The covenant faithfulness of their child is in their care. They brought him to the Lord, and then received him again, with the charge, 'Take this child, and nurse it for me.' Let them see that they do, indeed, nurse it *for the Lord*. Let the holy affections, principles, and duties, to which he is pledged, be the mark at which to direct his aim; let the solemn and irrevocable engagement he is under, with all its responsibility, be made to bear directly upon his heart and conscience. Such is the plan pursued in the scriptures—such should be the plan with all baptized children. The whole scheme of nurture and admonition should be constructed on the ground of their relation to God, as united with his Church, and covenanted to his service. To establish them in all the spiritual grace, and lead them to all the duties implied in this relation, should be the inspiring object of all their training. Admonition, instruction, exhortation, should each take its text from this chapter. Parental prayer should obtain therefrom both its pleadings and its earnestness. The child should, as soon as possible, be made to know and understand it.

"The success of parents, in their great office, depends very greatly upon the views with which they undertake it. Inadequate conceptions of the object to be attained, of its relative importance, and of the great principles of action on which alone its accomplishment may be expected, will explain a great many of the failures which the unwise and unstable are so apt to interpret to their great discouragement; and the surest guard against such misconceptions consists in having right views of the nature, the privileges, and the obligations of the baptismal relation. Do not these plainly show that the object to be attained in Christian education is not that children may be so far imbued with religious knowledge, and so far brought under the influence of religious principle, as to be secured against those corruptions, both of doctrine and life, which they must encounter in their subsequent passage through the world? Is it only that they may be so restrained from what is usually regarded as positive irreligion in opinion and practice, and so instructed in what

is true religion, that bye and bye, at some indefinite period in the future, before their day of grace is over, they may turn to the Lord, and be ready to die? Such views are wholly inadequate. Nothing less than positive piety—actual devotion of heart and life to God—just such piety as the Gospel requires of parents, must parents seek for their children—and that, not merely for their blessing bye and bye, when they shall have ceased to be children, but now, while they are the lambs of the flock, and ‘unspotted from the world.’ We are not to train them merely for the nurture, but in the nurture of the Lord. We are commanded to bring them now, while little children, to Christ, that he may take them in his arms, and bless them; and, when we do so, it must be with the object of putting them, not only into his care, against evils in the world, but in to his possession, and adoption, and service, for all the present and eternal gifts of his grace; not that they may be kept for some future dedication of themselves to his will, but that now, under his blessing, a work of grace may begin in their hearts, which will be carried on in them ‘unto the day of Jesus Christ.’

“It is of the utmost importance that this matter be well understood. The half-way mark is as much short of our duty, and God’s blessings, when we seek them for our children, as for ourselves. Parents must make a definite and positive decision, whom they will serve, in this matter as in every thing else; and whom, so far as they can settle the question, their children shall serve. Here, as elsewhere, ‘ye cannot serve two masters.’ The world and religion cannot be joint partners in the nurture of the Lord. There is as little promise of a blessing to that kind of training which contemplates for children only a partial influence of religion, instead of the entire mastery of religion—a *future* work of sanctification, with only a present work of instruction and restraint, instead of the *present* in-dwelling, in-working, and all-subduing power of the Spirit of God—as there is to that kind of Christian who thinks to divide his heart between God and the world, and live unto himself now, without losing heaven hereafter.

“Then let it be considered a first principle, in the religious training of children, that the object on which the

parents set their hearts, the mark at which they level their aim, is not merely good instruction, but the ingrafting and experience of positive piety—not merely good feelings and morals now, and piety afterwards, but positive piety now, as soon as possible; that their offspring may, from infancy onward, be ‘followers of God as dear children,’ and ‘walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless.’ In other words, that precisely what the preacher of the Gospel should seek for those to whom he is sent, they must seek for the little flock which the Good Shepherd has entrusted to their care.”\*

### *Conclusion.*

And now are there still those who will say we make baptism nothing by the view we take of it? To such we reply: Is it nothing to be met, on our first entrance into this world of sin and misery, with the wide opened arms of Christ, by his Church bidding us come to him? Is it nothing to have all the precious promises of God to children signed and sealed to us by an ordinance of Christ’s appointment? Is it nothing to be baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost by a minister of God, amidst the prayers of the faithful into whose fellowship they are received? Is it nothing to be put into the Church of Christ to be trained for heaven? Is it nothing to be adopted of the Holy Ghost, and to have its fostering care pledged to us? Is it nothing to have our Christian profession thus faithfully represented to us in so expressive an ordinance, and to be bound by such solemn vows to the performance of our part in the solemn covenant? If there be any who regard these evidences of God’s good will—these pledges of God’s gracious assistance, as nullities unless something more be done at the very time of baptism—except a new soul, as it were, be put into the child—we know not how to speak of them, except as ungrateful and presumptuous. What? When God thus condescends to take our children into his arms, and to bless them, and com-

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\* “Preliminary Address to Select, Family, and Parish Sermons.” By the Bishop of Ohio.

mend them to his Church, and promise all needful acts of his Spirit, and surround them with so many advantages, shall we say to him, that unless he will do something far better for them at once, and put a new nature into them, that he has done nothing? Instead of being most thankful for all these condescending and tender manifestations of God's love, and these promises of all needful grace in times to come, and wonder that he should be thus kind, shall we demand more on the very spot? Who shall say in how many thousand ways that which is done shall contribute to the future sanctification of the soul, although it is not effected at the time? The times and seasons are in the hands of God. After we have done the will of God, we have need of patience to inherit the blessing.

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It was the author's design to add to the foregoing some prayers and meditations to be used by parents at the birth of their children, and by parents and sponsors before and after their baptism; but the want of time and health has prevented it for the present. He can, therefore, only entreat that such meditations, prayers, and resolutions, as would be suggested by the principles of the treatise, may not be neglected.

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A few sentences, containing remarks which have suggested themselves to the author since the foregoing was written, will conclude the work.

### *On the use of the term regeneration,*

In saying that there is no objection to the use of the term regeneration, in connexion with baptism, when rightly interpreted, we would not be understood as advocating the use of it in conversation, or sermons, or tracts, except where it can be easily explained, and is explained at the time, so as not to be misunderstood. Such a cautious use of words, whose original meaning has become obsolete, and which are so liable to be misunderstood, is justified by sound sense and the prac-



tice of men in every age. Let a few instances in proof suffice. In the Old Testament the term gods is applied to princes or rulers by Moses; and our Lord alludes to the passages himself. But would it be wise in us now to use such language? In England certain persons are called Lords; but would it be proper in Americans to use the same? In the English marriage service the bridegroom is made to say to the bride, "With my body I thee worship," to signify the respect and love he bears her; but no one among us would wish to see this word now applied, in common language, to the affection borne to a creature. Variations in language will take place, and we are obliged to pay due regard to them.

*The Romish doctrine of baptismal regeneration.*

Having alluded to the sentiments of the Romish Church on the subject of baptism, it may be well to state them in the words of some of their formularies. In one of the latest works containing the forms of administering the sacraments in the Romish Church in our country, approved by the Pope, and used in the Diocese of Baltimore, we have the following language on the subject of baptism: "Baptism is the first and most essential of the sacraments, and absolutely necessary for salvation." "By this holy ceremony we are purified from that original guilt which has been transmitted by our first parents to all his posterity, and from every other sin that may have been committed before its reception. It imparts to the soul a new and spiritual life, which consists in an intimate union with God by faith, hope, and charity, and imprints on it a character which consecrates it in an especial manner to his service, and entitles it to all the blessings that have been purchased for us by the sufferings of Jesus Christ."

*On the treatment of baptized children.*

A pious and eminent divine, whose opinion in favor of the moral regeneration of some children at their baptism has been sometimes quoted, nevertheless declares, that it is proper to treat all children as unregenerate

until evidences of regeneration appear. By which it is of course meant, that they must be addressed as those who must be born again—must be called on to repent—the word of God must be engrafted on their hearts, as that by which they are to be made wise unto salvation—the Holy Spirit is to be invoked on them—they are to be exhorted to pray for its regenerating influence. Now, let us suppose all this done faithfully for the child, and that at a certain age it gives signs of a gracious change. Must that change be necessarily ascribed to the time of baptism? What, then, becomes of the effect of a pious education? How much more probable that this early piety is the result of God's blessing on the faithful effort of parents or others to bring up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? In order to magnify the effect of baptism, we must thus seriously interfere with the efficacy of an early training of the soul. God only can know whether the commencement was at or before baptism, or as the effect of the Spirit's influence in connection with truth, as instilled into the young mind. The latter appears far more probable.

# COMPANION TO THE PULPIT,

AN APPENDIX TO THE

## COMPANION TO THE FONT,

Being designed to show how the Preacher should address himself to the baptized, and all others, so as to be consistent with the word of God and the doctrines of the Church.

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Among the directions given to the sponsors, as to the pious training of the baptized child, is this, "That he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons." Of course the Church must mean such sermons as she thinks are in accordance with the doctrines set forth in her services; but as she professes to take these doctrines out of the Holy Scriptures, so she directs the ministers to take their sermons from the same, saying, that "as they cannot compass the doing of so weighty a work, as that pertaining to the salvation of man, but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the Holy Scriptures, they should be most studious in reading and learning the same." She makes them solemnly promise to "teach nothing, as necessary to salvation, but what they are persuaded may be concluded and proved by the scriptures." There is, therefore, an intimate connexion between the doctrine of the pulpit and the ordinance of baptism, according to our Church. So did our Savior decree, when the apostles were directed, first to preach the Gospel, and then baptize those who believed it. No reason, therefore, need be assigned for this addition, except that necessary connexion ordained by Christ and enjoined by the Church. The author, however, may be allowed to add, that besides his official connexion with the clergy of the diocese of Virginia, making it his duty to be ever guarding them against error, he also presides over a seminary for training young candidates for the ministry, and devotes a small portion of his time to their preparation for the weighty work,

and of course must feel a special anxiety that they should go forth knowing well how rightly to divide the word of truth. A mistake on this subject is most dangerous to preacher and hearer. The preacher must be wise to win souls—to turn them from sin to righteousness—to convert them unto God. The salvation of his own and his people's souls depends upon his taking heed to himself and the doctrine. A physician who treats his patient as being well, or only slightly indisposed, when a dangerous disease is in his body, contributes to his death. Thousands perish under such ignorance and wrong treatment. As to our souls, if any of them be whole, then they need no physician. Only they which feel themselves to be sick within, will call for the remedy. "To know ourselves diseased, is half our cure." Not to know that there is a plague in our hearts, when there is one doing the work of death, and to speak peace, peace to ourselves when there is no peace, is the most hopeless of all conditions. How dreadful when the minister of the Gospel shall contribute to such deception. None can deny, that if the effect of baptism upon the soul of a child be overestimated, or be esteemed something different from what it really is, that there must be great danger of regarding the child as it grows up as in a different state from what it really is, and of treating it differently from what it would be treated if no such effect had been produced. If there be such an instantaneous and thorough effect on the soul of the child in baptism, as only to require that the same shall be preserved—if children are not only required to renounce all evil, that is, as explained by some, never have any thing to do with it; but if some have very little to do with it, and others nothing at all—if, as some maintain, we are by baptism invested with the very righteousness of Adam before his fall, then where, in point of fact, and as to the treatment of the child, will be the great difference between such and Pelagius, who maintained that we came into the world without sin as Adam did, and that we only sin by following Adam. I know there is, doctrinally, a difference; but I fear, as to the treatment of the subject, there will not be much. The act of baptism puts both on the same footing, and both must now keep what they have—the one what it has by nature, the other what it has



by grace, but the same in both—the original righteousness of Adam. As to those who keep the deposit, whether of nature or of grace, of course they need no repentance; and what have they to do with the Scriptures enjoining repentance, or those prayers and confessions of the Church which suit only miserable sinners, in whom is no health? If such be the doctrine held, then shall we again have need of such canons as we find in the early church, (the African code,) anathematizing those who said, that it was in humility not in truth or reality, that they acknowledged themselves sinners, and maintained that the saints said for others, not for themselves, “Forgive us our trespasses.”

There have been from time to time individuals, and sometimes great numbers both in the ministry and out of it, who have held sentiments very much resembling this. They have utterly opposed themselves to the doctrine of conversion, or change of heart, or renewing of the mind, or deep repentance, such as for some time has been preached amongst us. The author can well remember the time, the conclusion of a long and dark period in the church of Virginia, when all such terms were reprobated, and not merely the terms, but the doctrine expressed by them, and a correct moral conduct, with the observance of the forms of religion, was all that was required, of the baptized.

I do not mean here to advocate all that was condemned by them, in what was held by their opponents. Much that was then, has been, and is now set forth in connexion with conversion, change of heart, the evidences of the same, and the means of promoting them, is much to be lamented. But let us not run into the opposite error.

There are those now who object to the term conversion, as applicable to any change required of a baptized person, no matter how much he has sinned, and even say that repentance is not at all required of some, and but partially of others; that the moral change effected in baptism is all the regeneration, or new birth, which can take place. Besides the quotations already made in the foregoing treatise, the following passage from a volume of Mr. Newman’s sermons, published a few years since in our country, and but too much patronized, will show the correctness of my assertion :

“Of those who have been saints, we must suppose the greater number are such as, more or less, have been preserved in holy obedience from their baptism onwards; the few are those who, after their baptism, have sinned grievously and repented; but still therefore may, if St. Paul’s instance be in point, rise to be as great saints as the many who after baptism needed no repentance.”

“O, my brethren, make much of your original state, if you possess it, and be careful not to lose it. Lose not the opportunity of that special blessedness which none but they can have who served God from their youth up in constant obedience. What is passed cannot be recalled. Whatever the heights of holiness to which repentant sinners obtain, yet they cannot have this pearl of great price, *not to have sinned.*”\*

On this and every subject an appeal must first be to the oracles of God. Did our Lord thus address himself to the circumcised Jews? Did the Apostle thus write to the baptized Christians? Did they thus preach, either to Jews or Gentiles?

Let the following references to the New Testament speak for themselves:

John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord, introduced his kingdom, by calling all those who had been circumcised to repent, baptizing them unto repentance for the remission of sins, recognising none as standing in no need of it.

When our Lord came, he addressed himself in like manner to all men. In the parable of the sower, he speaks of some ground as being good, into which the seed is sown; but how does he explain it? “But he that received seed into the good ground, is he that *heareth the word and understandeth it.*” Vide Matthew, 13th ch.

In the 5th chapter he gives a general description of the human heart, out of which “proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

Although, in a certain sense, all of these were children of

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\* Vide second sermon of the last volume published by Mr. H. Newman.

Abraham and sons of God by adoption, yet in the 8th of St. John he says to some, that though they were Abraham's seed, they were not his children, but the devil was their father.

In the 15th, he says to his disciples, "Ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you."

In the 16th, he promises the Spirit, that it may convince the world of sin, because they believe not on him.

In the 17th, "This is life eternal, that they may *know thee*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." In the same, "Sanctify them through thy truth."

Thus did our Lord preach, before his crucifixion, resurrection, and the sending down of the Holy Ghost, which were subjects to be more fully dwelt on by the Apostles after their occurrence.

Let us see how they preached, and what was the effect of the same. In the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we have a sketch of the first sermon. It was on the death and resurrection of Christ. And when they heard it, "they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Then said Peter unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." On the next occasion, recorded in the 3d chapter, he concludes thus: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" both words being used.

In the 8th chapter, we have the words spoken to Simon the Sorcerer, who had been baptized: "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart be forgiven thee. So I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." And again, the 13th chapter, he thus speaks of him: "O, full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

In the 10th chapter, we find that when Peter was preaching the word, the Holy Ghost fell on those who heard it; "And Peter said, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well

as we?" Here, as in other places, the gift of the Holy Ghost went before baptism, without any question.

In the 13th chapter we have a specimen of St. Paul's preaching. "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses."

In the sixteenth, we have the account of the conversion of the Jailor. In answer to the question, what must I do to be saved, Paul and Silas said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" and then the same night he and his house were baptized.

In the 26th chapter, St. Paul says he was called to preach unto the Gentiles, "that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith." "That they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

Let us now come to the Epistles, which were addressed especially to believers, and at a time when it is to be presumed, from all the circumstances of their case, and the evils to which they were subjected by professing Christ, they were for the most part sincere. The most of them were adult converts; yet some who had been baptized in infancy were old enough to be addressed. We find accordingly that the sacred writers address them as *saints, the faithful, elect, children of light, etc.* Yet even in these epistles we find many passages, showing that our address must be such as to include all in sin, and some of them as needing a thorough conversion, notwithstanding their baptism and profession.

In the first of these documents, the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, we have his view of justification. In the 3d chapter he says, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." He says, "It is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." In the 5th chapter it is said,



“ Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the previous chapter, it was said that faith shall be imputed to us for righteousness, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

In the 10th, it is written : “ If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed ;” that is, to confess him before men, whether in baptism or any other way.

In the 7th chapter, 2d Corinthians, we have these words : “ Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

In the Epistle to the Galatians, 3d chapter, this question is asked : “ Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or the hearing of faith ?” In the same it is said : “ The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” “ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

In the 4th : “ Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into your hearts, crying Abba Father.”

In the 5th : “ For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; *but faith*, which worketh by love.”

In the 6th : “ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but a new creature.”

In the Epistle of the Hebrews, 6th chapter, we have these words : “ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance ; seeing they crucify to themselves the son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

In the Epistle of St. James, 1st chapter: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures."

In the first Epistle of St. Peter: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which abideth forever."

Second Epistle of St. Peter, 1st chapter: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that, by these, ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust."

First Epistle of St. John, 1st chapter: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and the truth is not in us." Chapter 5th: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."

Let any one compare the foregoing language addressed to those who had been baptized either in infancy, or at a later period, to the language which some would now have us use in speaking to the same persons. Where is the doctrine of justification by baptism and a moral change only to be preserved, and by many in a great measure preserved, and by some altogether, so as to dispense with conversion or repentance?

### *Testimony of the book of Homilies on this subject.*

If there be any document to which we may look for the very pattern given us by the Church after which to model the doctrine of our sermons, it must be of course the book of Homilies. These were written in the time of Edward the Sixth and of Queen Elizabeth, and it is believed chiefly, if not entirely, by Cranmer and Jewell. They were designed to aid the more ignorant of the clergy, and to be a guide to others. They were commanded to be read in all the churches, not only in the reign of Elizabeth, but again in that of King James, her successor; and in the directions given it is said, that "they were not only for a help to the non-preaching, but with all for a pattern and a boundary, as it were, for the

preaching ministers," who were directed to read over and peruse diligently the book of Articles and the two books of Homilies. In one of the articles of the English Church, they were declared to "contain a godly and wholesome doctrine." In the American Church the same is declared in her thirty-fifth article. "The second book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this article, doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, necessary for these times, as doth the former book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of Edward the sixth." The reading of them was suspended until a revision could be made clearing them of absolute phrases and local references; but they were especially appointed by the House of Bishops to be studied by all candidates for the ministry, as containing a body of sound Christian doctrine, and the knowledge of their contents indispensably required at their examination. Making, as they do, an octavo volume of five or six hundred pages, it is not to be expected that every argument, illustration, and exposition of Scripture passages, is to be regarded as of the same authority with the articles; whereupon it is generally conceded that they are binding only so far as the godly and wholesome doctrine contained in them is set forth, and as to their obvious and general design on whatever subject they treat. Much is it to be desired, that not only every minister, but every family in our church, had a copy of these sermons, more especially at this time, when doctrines and practices so contrary to them are attempted to be introduced amongst us. Three editions have been published, and it is hoped more will be called for.

I now proceed to show, by extracts from these discourses; that I have not mistaken the doctrine of the Church as to baptism, faith, and repentance, and the proper mode of addressing the baptized.

First, let me exhibit their view of the position of faith, and the sacraments in the scheme of redemption.

The first homily is on the misery, that is, the sinfulness of man. In it man's dreadful condition is set forth, and God's mercy to him in Christ. At the close of it are these words: "Now, how these exceeding great mercies of God, set abroad in Christ Jesus for us, *be obtained, and how we be delivered from the captivity of sin, death, and hell*, shall

more at large, with God's help, be declared in the next sermon. "To that sermon, then, we must look for an account of the way in which we take hold of this deliverance, and how it is imparted to us. "It is entitled a sermon of the salvation of mankind, by only Christ our Saviour, from sin and death everlasting." Its subject is justification by faith only, as set forth by St. Paul, whose words and reasonings are quoted, and who it is said "declareth here nothing on the behalf of man concerning his justification, but only of a true and living faith; which nevertheless is the gift of God, and not man's only work without God. And yet that faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, dread, and the fear of God, to be joined with faith in every man that is justified, but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying." In the next homily we have a description of this faith, which is called a "true, living, and christian faith." It begins, "*The first coming unto God*, good christian people is, *through faith*, whereby (as it is declared in the last sermon) we be justified before God." It then proceeds to show what this faith is, distinguishing it from a mere historical belief. "The very sure and living christian faith is not only to believe all things of God which are contained in scripture, but also is an earnest trust and confidence in God, that he doth regard us, that he is careful of us, as the father is over the child whom he doth love, and that he will be merciful to us for his only son's sake." "As the light cannot be hid, but will show itself at one place or other, so true faith cannot be kept secret; but, when occasion is offered, it will break out and show itself by good works."\*

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\* No one can read these passages, and those describing faith in the catechisms of Noel, Calvin, and others, used in England at the time of the Reformation, and in the other writings of the Reformers, without seeing that by a true faith they meant not a mere reception of christianity as a gift of God to man, however sincere, but a personal appropriating faith—an acceptance of the terms of salvation on our part—a belief that we are accepted—a witness of the spirit that we are God's children. This is the true meaning of these words in our catechism, "faith, whereby we steadfastly believe the promises of God made to us in that sacrament;" that is, we steadfastly believe that the promises of forgiveness and sanctification have been fulfilled in us. Whoever will read the longer catechisms, of which ours is an abridgment, will be well persuaded that such is the true design and meaning of this part of our short catechism.



Our next quotation is from the second sermon on the Passion, wherein man's hopeless condition is set forth without a Savior, and then it proceeds: "Now it remaineth that I show unto you, how to apply Christ's death and passion to our comfort, as a medicine to our wounds, so that it may work the same effect in us wherefore it was given, namely, the health and salvation of our souls. For as it profiteth a man nothing to have salve, unless it be well applied to the part infected, so the death of Christ shall stand us in no force, unless we apply it to ourselves in such sort as God hath appointed. Almighty God commonly worketh by means, and in this thing he hath also ordained a certain mean, whereby we may take fruit and profit to our soul's health. What mean is that? Forsooth it is faith—not an uncertain or wavering faith, but a sure, steadfast, grounded, and unwavering faith. God sent his Son into the world, saith St. John. To what end? That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Mark these words—that whosoever believeth in him. Here *is the mean* whereby we must apply the fruits of Christ's death unto our deadly wound. Here *is the mean* whereby we must obtain eternal life, namely, faith." After quoting a number of instances from scripture, where salvation is ascribed to faith only, it adds: "By this, then, you may well perceive, that *the only mean* and instrument of salvation required of our part, is faith; that is to say, a sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God, whereby we persuade ourselves that God both doth and will forgive our sins—that he hath accepted us again into his favor—that he hath released us from the bonds of damnation, and received us again into the number of his elect people, not for our merits and deserts, but only and solely for the merits of Christ's death and passion." Again: "Thus have we heard, in few words, *the mean* whereby we must apply the fruits and merits of Christ's death unto us, so that it may work the salvation of our souls, namely, a sure, steadfast, perfect, and grounded faith. For as all they which beheld steadfastly the brazen serpent were healed and delivered, at the very sight thereof, from their corporal diseases and bodily stings; even so all those which behold Christ crucified with a true and lively faith, shall

undoubtedly be delivered from the grievous wounds of the soul, be they never so deadly or many in number." The foregoing are only a few out of many passages which might be adduced, showing how faith in Christ—such a faith as they described—is exclusively the instrument of justification, according to the sentiment of the writers, appealing to, and quoting the word of God. No language could be used which would more effectually shut out from the office of justifying, not only baptism, which is not mentioned as accompanying it, but hope, love, penitence, and all virtues and good deeds, however much they are enjoined.

Let us now see how differently the sacraments are spoken of, and what a different office is assigned them.

The homily on the common prayer and sacraments begins thus: "Among the manifold exercises of God's people, dear Christians, there is none more necessary, for all estates, and at all times, than is public prayer and the due use of the sacraments. For, in the first, we beg at God's hands all such things as otherwise we cannot obtain; and in the other, he embraceth us and offereth himself to be embraced of us." What is meant by this, is shown by quotations from St. Augustine on the nature of prayer and the sacraments. According to St. Augustine, the homily says, a sacrament is "a visible sign of an invisible grace, that is to say, that setteth out to the eyes and other outward senses, the inward working of God's free mercy, and doth, *as it were*, seal in our hearts the promises of God." It says there are two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, "whereunto is annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sins, and of our holiness and joining in Christ."

Baptism is expressly mentioned in the homily on salvation or justification, immediately after the most explicit declaration, that the merits of Christ, embraced by faith, are accepted of God "*for our full and perfect justification,*" in the following manner: "Insomuch that infants, being baptized and dying in their infancy, *are, by this sacrifice, washed from their sins, brought to God's favor, and made his children, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.* And they which, in act or deed, do sin after their baptism, when they turn to God unfeignedly, they are likewise washed

from their sins, in such sort that there remaineth not any spot of sin that shall be imputed to their damnation." In the second part of the same sermon it is also written, that renouncing all our own virtues and good deeds, for remission of sins and justification, "we must trust only in God's mercy, and that sacrifice which our high priest and Savior Jesus Christ once offered for us on the cross, to obtain thereby God's grace and remission, as well of our original sin in baptism, as of all actual sin committed by us after baptism, if we truly repent and unfeignedly turn unto him again." There is still another passage in the third sermon on salvation or justification, upon which great reliance has been placed, for the doctrine of baptismal justification. It is found in the following quotation :

"Here you have heard the office of God in our justification, and how we receive it of him freely, by his mercy, without our deserts, *through true and lively faith*. Now, you shall hear the office and duty of a Christian man unto God again, for his great mercy and goodness. Our office is not to pass the time of this present life unfruitfully and idly, after that we are baptized or justified, not caring how few good works we do."

This passage, "after we are baptized or justified," has been often triumphantly quoted by those who advocate the doctrine of baptismal justification as sustaining their system, and authorizing the use of the term baptism as synonymous with justification. It is well that they should make the best use of this one passage, as it is the only one in the whole Book of Homilies making a volume of more than five hundred octavo pages, which even seems to countenance it, and because there is not one to be found throughout all the offices of the Prayer Book which has been attempted to be used in favor of the identity of the terms baptize and justify. Not only this, but we affirm that there is a most careful avoidance in our articles, offices, and homilies, of such a connection of justification with baptism as might afford the shadow of a countenance to the doctrine. The emphasis is exclusively laid throughout on faith, as that act in man with which God has connected justification. Could the Reformers have foreseen the revival of the doctrine of baptismal jus-

tification in the Church, and wished to condemn it beforehand, they could not have been more careful in their language, unless this one passage be an exception. But, in opposition to all our other standards, to the whole volume of homilies, where we are so often said to be saved, to be justified, by faith only, and not even in part by penitence, or love, or hope, or any thing else, must we put this interpretation on the expression we are now considering; when we remember, too, that the smallest of our stops omitted or introduced decides the sense? When it is said "after we are baptized or justified," must we needs understand the homily to say, that they are the very same things, or so identical as to time, that the one may be used for the other, they being inseparable? Does the copulative word *or*, in our language, always equalize or identify the two things on either side of it? If we consult our great master of words, Dr. Johnson, we find that it is sometimes used as expressive of opposition, instead of identity; at others as a substitute for the word *either*. The homily, therefore, may have intended to say that "we are not to pass the rest of our life idly after we are baptized, and thus united to the visible church; or after we are justified by faith, and have thus realized the design of baptism. To live idly is inconsistent with both of these, and therefore must be condemned. But, as the true way of understanding scripture is by comparing scripture with scripture, and thus ascertaining its true scope and tenor, so would we ask the reader to turn to this homily on salvation, with those on faith, and good works following after it, and on the sacraments, in another part of this volume, and carefully and candidly see for himself whether the writer thereof meant to teach the doctrine of baptismal justification. If they be not satisfied by these, then let them read over the articles on the subject; and if they be not thus convinced, I need not spend words in the effort."

If, indeed, these passages in the homily place baptism on a higher footing in common with faith than we have assigned it, then must the same place be assigned to alms-giving, to which the homily, in a certain sense, ascribes the forgiveness of sins.

After quoting various passages from God's word, contain-



ing great promises to alms-giving and mercifulness, saying that they purge from sin and deliver from death, the homily shows that these things are only the fruits of grace, the evidences of justification, just as good fruit grows on a good tree, and proves that it is good. "The meaning, then, of these sayings in the Scriptures, and other holy writings—alms-deeds do wash away our sins, and mercy to the poor doth blot out our offences—is that we, doing these things according to God's will and our duty, have our sins, indeed, washed away, and our offences blotted out, not for the worthiness of them, but by the grace of God which worketh all in all; and that for the promise that God hath made to them that are obedient to his commandments, that he, (that is God,) which is the truth, might be justified in performing the truth due to his true promise." There certainly is the promise of forgiveness to those who are merciful and forgiving, just as there is of remission of sins to baptism; but have we a right to say that we are justified by our alms deeds or mercifulness? There are those who maintain that there are different justifications—justification by the sacraments, justification by good works, justification, also, by faith; and various degrees of justification. Our Church, following St. Paul, and the whole tenor of the Scriptures, and not thinking that St. James taught any other doctrine, confines it to faith, without derogating from the promises made to baptism, alms-giving, or any other duty; for she well knew the confusion and mischief which has ever resulted from extending the application of it to any thing else than a living faith in Christ, as the instrument by which we lay hold of the merits of Christ, through which alone we are justified or accounted righteous before God. We might apply the term justification to baptism in the same sense in which St. James applies it to the works of Abraham, as the evidences of that faith by which alone we are justified, the effect being put for the cause or instrument; but such is not the use made of the word in our articles. As Bishop Jewell was the author of most of the Homilies, it may not be amiss here to insert his opinion on the subject of remission of sins, in connexion with absolution and baptism, as given in his

apology, which was set forth by authority in the reign of Elizabeth, as the exposition of the doctrine of the Church.

“Touching the keys wherewith they (the ministers) may either open or shut the kingdom of heaven, we with Chrysostom say, ‘they be the knowledge of the Scriptures.’ With Tertullian, we say, ‘they be the interpretation of the law;’ and with Eusebius, we call them ‘the word of God.’”

The American annotator on Jewell says, that he explains the meaning of Eusebius thus: “That duly receiving the sacrament ordained by Christ, we receive also the remission of sin, is not any way denied. For the substance of all sacraments is the word of God, which St. Paul calls ‘the word of reconciliation.’ This word is the instrument of remission of sin. The sacraments are the seals affixed to the same. The priest is the mean. Augustine saith, in the water is the word of God that maketh clean. Take away the word, and what is water else but water.”

Jewell elsewhere says, “that the key, whereby the way and entry to the kingdom of God is opened unto us, is the word of the gospel, and the expounding of the law and scriptures.” “The sacraments,” he says, “are certain holy signs and ceremonies which Christ would we should use, that by them he might set before our eyes the mysteries of our salvation, and might more strongly confirm the faith which we have in his blood, and might seal his grace in our hearts.” With the fathers, he calls them “visible words, seals of righteousness, and tokens of grace.” “The grace of God (he says) is given us in the sacraments, because it is represented and laid before us in the sacraments; we use them humbly, as instruments of the grace of God.” See chapter 6th, and notes. Again he says: “The sacraments serve specially to direct and aid our faith;” calling them, with Augustine, “visible words, and seals and testimonies of the gospel.”

Having thus shown the doctrine of the Church on the subject of justification, as set forth in the homilies, I proceed to that which is the leading object of this appendix, viz: to see what is the proper mode of address to baptized children, as they grow in age. Shall we speak to them as if some have so preserved their baptismal purity—the new

nature supposed to be given them in baptism—that they either need no repentance, or only require to have renewed in them “whatsoever has been decayed by the fraud or malice of the devil, or by their own carnal will or frailness” according to the language of the service for the sick, which has been adduced in proof of the doctrine, though we cannot see why the fraud or malice of the devil may not cause to decay a holiness acquired after baptism, as well as at baptism. Or shall we address them all as needing that repentance which accomplishes true faith and turning unto God, when they come to years of discretion, and which is the same with conversion, change of heart, renovation, new creature, or regeneration, as generally used among Christians?

There are two homilies—the one on falling from God, the other on repentance—in which we shall surely find out the true sense of the Church on this subject.

In the homily on falling from God, the word baptism is not once mentioned, nor any allusion that we can perceive to any condition into which it places us, from which we fall from God. Man is throughout treated as a sinner turned away from God, and only turning to him by faith in Christ; but who may, after this, fall away from God. Let the following sentence be adduced in proof: “For whereas God hath showed to all them that truly believe his gospel his face of mercy in Jesus Christ, which doth so lighten their hearts that they (if they behold it as they ought to do) be transformed to his image, be made partakers of his heavenly light and of his Holy Spirit, and be fashioned to him in all goodness requisite to the children of God; so that if they, after, do neglect the same, if they be unthankful to him, if they order not their lives according to his example and doctrine, and to the setting forth of his glory, he will take away from them his kingdom, his holy word, whereby he would reign in them, because they bring not forth the fruit thereof that he looketh for.” Let any read over this homily, and then ask whether any one at this time, holding the views against which I am contending, would pen such a sermon, in which there is not the least allusion to baptismal grace from which to fall.

We proceed to the sermon on repentance, which begins

thus: "There is nothing that the Holy Ghost doth so much labor in all the Scriptures to beat into men's heads, as repentance, amendment of life, and speedy returning unto the Lord God of Hosts. And no marvel why—for we do daily and hourly, by *our wickedness and stubborn disobedience, horribly fall away from God*, thereby purchasing unto ourselves (if he should deal with us according to our justice) eternal damnation. So that no doctrine is so necessary in the church of God as the doctrine of repentance and amendment of life." In this sermon is considered that doctrine which is condemned in our articles—that of the impossibility of repentance to those who commit some deadly sin after baptism. It is remarkable, however, that they do not once mention the word baptism, but use language which shows that they consider the persons treated of as not merely baptized in infancy, but having come to God through faith in Christ afterward. "Whereupon, we do not without just cause detest and abhor the damnable opinion of them which do most wickedly go about to persuade simple and ignorant people *that if we chance, after we be once come to God and grafted in his son Jesus Christ*, to fall into some horrible sin, repentance shall be unprofitable to us, there is no more hope of reconciliation, or to be received again into the favor of God." After quoting various scriptures on the subject, it says: "It is most evident and plain that these things ought to be understood of them that were with the Lord before, and by their sins and wickedness were gone away from him. For we do not turn again unto him, with whom we were never before, but we come unto him." Again, it uses the same words: "Whereupon, it followeth necessarily, that although we do, after he be once come to God and grafted into his son Jesus Christ, fall into great sins," etc. That grafted into Christ means much more than mere baptism in infancy in these places, is evident from the whole discourse. Immediately after, it speaks of "David being by the same faith justified and grafted into Jesus Christ to come," and that "Peter was grafted into Jesus Christ," but that both of these, who fell after a known and professed piety, were pardoned, on repentance. Throughout the three sermons into which this homily is divided, there is neither mention of baptism



nor any recognition of a baptismal purity to be preserved or lost. If any should still say that "our coming unto God, and being grafted into Christ," must be the condition in which children are placed by baptism, and that it is here meant, we refer them to the first words of the homily on faith, where it is written: "The first coming unto God, good Christian people, is through faith, whereby we be justified before God."

*The Homily on the Resurrection.*

This homily throws light on the last quoted. After speaking of the glorious effects of Christ's death and resurrection in taking away sin and malediction and death, it says: "If thou doubtest of so great wealth and felicity that is wrought for thee, O man, call to thy mind, that therefore hast thou received into thine own possession the everlasting verity, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to confirm to thy conscience the truth of all this matter. Thou hast received him, if in true faith and repentance of heart thou hast received him, if in purpose of amendment thou hast received him, for an everlasting gage, or pledge of thy salvation." A little farther on it says, quoting the words of St. Peter: "For what shall it avail us, to be escaped and delivered from the filthiness of the world *through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, if we be entangled again therewith, and be overcome again? Certainly it had been better," saith he, "never to have known the way of righteousness, than, after it is known and received, to turn back again from the holy commandment of God given unto us; for so shall the proverb have place in us, where it is said, 'the dog has returned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire again.'" It then proceeds: "What a shame it were for us, being thus so clearly and freely washed from our sin, to return to our filthiness again! What a folly it were, thus endowed with righteousness, to lose it again! What madness it were to lose the inheritance that we be now set in, for the vile and transitory pleasures of sin!" After pursuing this same strain for some time, speaking to those who, by true faith and penitence, had come to

God, and warning them against falling away from him, it then quotes a passage from St. Paul on the resurrection, in which reference is made to our profession in baptism: "*If ye delight in this article of our faith, that Christ is risen again from death to life, then follow you the example of his resurrection, as St. Paul exhorteth us, saying, 'as we be buried with Christ by our baptism into death, so let us daily die to sin, mortifying and killing the evil desires and motions thereof. And as Christ was raised up from death by the glory of the Father, so let us rise to a new life, and walk continually therein, that we may likewise, as natural children, live a conversation to move men to glorify our Father which is in Heaven. If, therefore, we be risen with Christ, by our faith, to the hope of everlasting life, let us rise also with Christ, after his example, to a new life, and leave our old. We shall then be truly risen, if we seek for things that be heavenly, if we have our affections on those things that be above, and not on things that be on earth.'*" It then exhorts, in the language of scripture, to all the virtues of religion, and says: "If these, and such other heavenly virtues ye ensue in the residue of your life, ye shall show plainly that ye be risen with Christ, and that ye be the heavenly children of your Father in Heaven, from whom, as from the giver, cometh these graces and gifts; ye must consider that ye be therefore cleansed and renewed, that ye should from henceforth serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of your lives, that ye may reign with him in everlasting life."

### *Homilies for Good Friday and Whitsunday.*

There are a few passages in these homilies which bear on the subject we have in hand, and must not be omitted. In the sermon for Good Friday it is written: "For Christ hath not so redeemed us from sin that we may safely return to it again, but he hath redeemed us that we should forsake the motions thereof and live to righteousness; yea, we be therefore washed in our baptism from the filthiness of sin, that we should live afterward in the pureness of life. In baptism we promised to renounce the devil and his suggestions; we

promised to be as obedient children, always following God's will and pleasure." And a little after it is said: "For such power is given us to be the children of God, so many as believe in Christ's name."

In the above extracts there is a passage which is sometimes quoted to prove a moral change in baptism, which may supersede any other in after life: "Yea, we be therefore washed in our baptism from the filthiness of sin, that we should live afterward in the pureness of life." If such be its meaning, then we say of it, as of a preceding passage, that there is not only none supporting it in the whole book of homilies, or in the prayer book, but that the whole tenor of both is opposed to it. But may we not understand the words "washed from filthiness," as used in scripture and by the Church, in some other sense than as signifying a moral purification of the nature, so radical as not to require renewing? The Scriptures certainly sometimes use them in a figurative and sacramental sense, as shewing what is professed and designed, not what is actually possessed. The Church, in the baptismal service, speaks of the "mystical washing away of sin" as something different from a radical washing of the heart. It is evidently used in this homily to signify what is professed and sought for in baptism. The context shews this. We are there represented as redeemed by Christ from sin, "that we *should* forsake the motions thereof, and live to righteousness." "In baptism we promised to renounce the devil and his suggestions." "For such power is given us to be the children of God, so many as believe in Christ's name." Again, we refer the reader to the whole tenor of the homilies, and especially to the one from which the disputed passage is taken.

### *Homily for Whitsunday.*

In this we have a full account of the operations of the Holy Ghost. We shall perceive by some passages in it that the word regeneration was not confined to the act of sealing the promises of God in baptism, and grafting us into Christ's body, the Church; but was used sometimes in its higher sense.

“The office of the Father, it says, is to create ; of the Son, to redeem ; of the Holy Ghost, to sanctify and regenerate. Whereof the last, the more it is hid from our understanding, the more it ought to move all men to wonder at the secret and mighty working of God’s Holy Spirit which is within us. For it is the Holy Ghost, and no other thing, that doth quicken the minds of men, stirring up good and godly motions in their hearts, which are agreeable to the will and commandment of God, such as otherwise of their own crooked and perverse nature they should never have.”

After mentioning the instances of the working of this Spirit in David and Matthew, and Peter and Paul, it says : “Such is the power of the Holy Ghost to regenerate men, and as it were to bring them forth anew, so that they shall be nothing like the men they were before.” And the true rule by which to know whether the Holy Ghost dwells in us, it declares to be, by our having its fruits, “love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness,” etc.

It concludes thus : “Let us, (as we are most bound,) give hearty thanks to God the Father, and his son Jesus Christ, for sending down his Comforter into the world, humbly beseeching him so to work in our hearts by the power of this Holy Spirit, *that we being regenerate and newly born again, in all goodness, righteousness, sobriety, and truth,* may in the end be made partakers of everlasting life in his heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.” That these passages refer to some marvellous change in children at their baptism, I presume no one will maintain. If it were so, it is most strange that there should be not a word about it in the homily. To say that children “are regenerate and newly born at their baptism in *all goodness, righteousness, sobriety, and truth,*” is what scarcely any one will affirm as the doctrine of the church. It must of course refer to adults, who have by faith and repentance, the work of the Spirit, become new creatures in Christ.

We shall make no further use of the homilies than to show, by a few extracts, how they address themselves to all men as sinners, and how they use the law in order to bring them to a knowledge of sin ; and then, how faithfully they condemn all manner of sins, and exhort to all virtuous and



good deeds; thus shewing what kind of sermons the Church would have us preach to the young baptized persons, when she directs the sponsors to see that they hear sermons.

In the first part of the homily on the misery—that is, sinfulness of man—David is spoken of as mourning over his sins: “How well weigheth this holy man his sins, which he confesseth they may be so many in number, and so hid and hard to understand, that it is in a manner impossible to know, utter, or number them? Wherefore he having a true, earnest, and deep contemplation and consideration of his sins, and yet not coming to the bottom of them, he maketh supplication to God to forgive him his privy, secret, and hid sins—the knowledge of which he cannot attain unto. He weigheth rightly his sins from their original root and spring-head, perceiving inclinations, provocations, stirrings, stings, buds, branches, dregs, infections, tastes, feelings, and scents of them to continue in him still. Wherefore he says, mark and behold, *I was conceived in sins*—he saith not sin, but in the plural number, sins; forasmuch as out of one, as a fountain, spring all the rest.” Here was David, the man after God’s own heart, deeply repenting not of one great sin, but of many; and is it not dangerous to hold out now the idea that there be some baptized persons who need no repentance, and many who need but little, and none of them a thorough conversion of soul—that having taken place in the baptism of unconscious infancy.

In the second part of the homily, on the same subject, it is said, “Forasmuch as the true knowledge of ourselves is very necessary to come to the right knowledge of God, ye have heard in the last reading how humbly all good men have always thought of themselves; and so to think and judge of themselves, are taught of God, their creator, by his holy word. For, of ourselves, we be crabtrees which can bring forth no apples. We be of ourselves of such earth as can bring forth but weeds, nettles, brambles, briers, cockle and darnel. Our fruits be declared, in the fifth chapter to the Galatians, we have neither faith, charity, patience, hope, chastity, nor any thing else that is good, but of God; and these virtues he called them the fruits of the Holy Ghost, and not the fruits of man.” And now, instead of saying,

that having been baptized in infancy, our natures were changed, and some, unlike Adam, have never fallen from our new state, and others but little, it proceeds to speak to all as miserable and wretched sinners, who should humble ourselves before God and cry for mercy. "Let none of us be ashamed to say with holy St. Peter, *I am a sinful man.* Let us say with holy David, *We have sinned with our fathers, we have done amiss, and done wickedly.* Let us all make open confession with the prodigal son to our Father, and say with him, *We have sinned against heaven, and before thee, O Father; we are not worthy to be called thy sons.* Let us all say with holy Baruch, *O Lord, our God, to us is worthily ascribed shame and confusion; but to thee righteousness.* We have sinned, we have done wickedly, we have behaved ourselves ungodly in all thy righteousness. Let us all say with the holy prophet Daniel, *O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee; unto us belongeth confusion.* We have sinned, we have been naughty, we have offended, we have fled from thee, we have gone back from all thy precepts and judgments. So we learn of all good men, in holy Scriptures, to humble ourselves, and to exalt, extol, praise, magnify, and glorify God."

In the homily on the nativity, in the second book of homilies, we have a picture of man, both before and after the fall. "He was made according to the image and similitude of God; he was indued with all kinds of heavenly gifts; he had no spot of uncleanness in him; he was sound and perfect in all his parts, both outwardly and inwardly; his reason was uncorrupt; his understanding was pure and good; his will obedient and godly; he was made altogether like unto God, in righteousness and holiness, in wisdom and truth; to be short, in all kind of perfection."

Thus perfect was man, as he first came from the hands of God. But now, some say, that justifying righteousness was a subsequent gift, and that this was lost by the fall, and can be restored only in baptism, which justifies us, and places us on the same footing with Adam; and that we must see and not lose it, or else it is doubtful whether we ever regain it. Against this doctrine one of our articles protests.

Let us now see his picture after the fall, as set forth in the

homily just quoted. "Whereby it came to pass, that as before he was blessed, so now he was accursed; as before he was loved, so now he was abhorred; as before he was most beautiful and precious, so now he was most vile and wretched in the sight of his Lord and master; instead of the image of God, he was now become the image of the Devil; instead of the citizen of heaven, he was now become the bonds slave of hell; having in himself no one part of his former purity and cleanness, but being altogether spotted and defiled, insomuch that now he seemed to be nothing else but a lump of sin; and, therefore, by the just judgment of God, was condemned to everlasting death. This, so miserable a plague, if it had only rested on Adam, who first offended, it had been so much the easier, and might the better have been borne. But it fell not only on him, but on his posterity and children forever, so that the whole brood of Adam's flesh should sustain the self-same fall and punishment which their forefather, by his offence, most justly had deserved." Again, in the same sermon, it is said, "Before Christ's coming into the world, all men, universally in Adam, were nothing else but a wicked and crooked generation, rotten and corrupt trees, stony ground, full of brambles and briers, etc. But after he was once come down from heaven, and had taken our frail nature upon him, he made all them that *would receive him truly, and believe his word, good trees, and good ground, fruitful and pleasant branches, children of light, citizens of heaven, sheep of his fold, members of his body, heirs of his kingdom, his true friends and brothers, sweet and living bread, the elect and chosen people of God.*" After quoting both St. Peter and Paul, on the condition of man in his fallen state, it then says, in the words of the latter, "But after the loving kindness of God, our Savior offered to save mankind, not according to the righteousness which we have done, but according to his great mercy, he saved us by the fountain of the new birth, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he poured upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that we being *once justified by his grace, should be heirs of eternal life, through faith and hope in his blood.*" It would appear, that those who "received him truly and believed in his word, were the persons

who were made good trees and good ground;" not infants at their baptism.

Let us now see how the authors of our homilies proceed, in order to bring men to a proper sense of that lost condition which they set forth throughout the volume.

In the homily for Good Friday, when they desire to make all men feel their desperate condition without a Saviour, they show that all the sacrifices which could be offered are utterly ineffectual to atone for sin, and then ask "what should he then do?" Should he go about to serve and keep the law of God divided into two tables, and so purchase to himself eternal life? Indeed, if Adam and his posterity had been able to satisfy and fulfil its law perfectly, in loving God above all things, and their neighbor as themselves, then should they have easily quenched the Lord's wrath and escaped the terrible sentence of eternal death pronounced against them by Almighty God; for it is written, do thus and thou shalt live; that is to say, fulfil thy commandments, keep thyself upright and perfect in them according to my will, then shalt thou live and not die. Here is eternal life promised on this condition, and so that they keep and observe the law. But, such was the frailty of mankind after his fall, such was his weakness and imbecility, that he could not walk uprightly in God's commandments, though he would never so fain, but daily and hourly fell from his bounden duty, offending the Lord his God divers ways, to the great increase of his condemnation, insomuch that the prophet David cried out in this wise: "All are gone astray, all are become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." In this case what profit could we have by the law? None at all; for so St. James saith, 'he that shall observe the whole law, and yet faileth in one point, is become guilty of all.' And in the book of Deuteronomy it is written, "cursed be he, saith God, which abideth not in all things that are written in the law to do them." Behold, the law brought a curse with it and maketh it guilty, not because it is of itself naught or unholy—God forbid we should so think—but because the frailty of our sinful flesh is such that we can never fulfil it according to the perfection that the Lord requireth. Could Adam, then, think you, hope or trust



to be saved by the law? No, he could not. But the more he looked on the law, the more he saw his own damnation set before his eyes, as it were in a clear glass. So that now, of himself, he was most wretched and miserable, destitute of all hope, and never able to pacify God's heavy displeasure, nor yet to escape the terrible judgment of God, whereunto he and all his posterity had fallen by disobeying the strait commandment of the Lord their God. But O the abundant riches of God's great mercy! O the unspeakable goodness of his heavenly wisdom! When all hope of righteousness was past on our part, when we had nothing in ourselves whereby we might quench his burning wrath, and work the salvation of our own souls, and rise out of the miserable estate wherein we lay; then, even then, did Christ, the son of God, by the appointment of his Father, come down from Heaven, to be wounded for our sakes, to be reputed for the wicked, to be condemned unto death, to take upon him the reward of our sins, and to give his body to be broken on the cross for our offences."

Such is the use we are taught to make of the law. By it the ministers of God must endeavor to make the knowledge of sin come into their people's hearts. No minister, who does not understand this right use of it, can hope to awaken sinners to a sense of their lost state, or to keep christians very humble at sight of the sins even of their most holy things. Our Church, in perfect consistency, sets forth this in two other places. In the catechism, after making our children repeat the commandments, she gives a short but most comprehensive explanation of them, applying them to the very thoughts and intents of the heart, though some of them seem only addressed to the outward act. Let a minister or parent only take that as his rule of interpretation, and enlarge on it, by the help of the Scriptures, and he will make a faithful use of the moral law. On another occasion, also, does the Church adopt a most effective method of preaching the law, so as to convince of sin. She bids her ministers, in the most solemn manner, read these laws to the congregation on their bended knees, and pausing after each one, requires the people thus prostrate before God to cry out "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." Why

cry for mercy, that is, for pardon, if they had not broken each one. Why pray, incline our hearts to keep this law, if each law was not addressed to the very heart, and forbid every improper thought and feeling, and required all within us to love and keep the same.

It is to be feared that too many, even on their bended knees, hear these laws, and repeat the prayer, who, nevertheless, do not understand how broad the commandment is. I know not a more useful subject for a small tract than an explanation of this part of our service. Let each commandment be sustained by some of the many precepts of scripture, showing that it reached to our thoughts and feelings, and to things leading to its transgression, so as to prevent its being understood only in the letter, and applied only to the outward act. Then let the sinner, crying for mercy, specify some of these in an enlargement of the prayer. Then let him enlarge, also, the petition that God would incline his heart to keep this law, by specifying some of the many ways in which it should be kept by the heart. In fine, let them be only a paraphrase of the commandment and of that short prayer, and it might be an useful help to the penitential exercises of the sincere and humble worshipper, and even in the hands of an unawakened sinner an instrument of conviction.

### *To conclude with the Homilies.*

The minister of our Church will not do them justice, unless he imitate not only their sound exposition of man's guilty state and deep depravity, their clear exhibitions of the plan of salvation, their right use of the law, but also their bold and faithful condemnation of all vices and follies, and their zealous exhortation to every virtue and good work. Herein do they copy after the example of our Lord and his Apostles. While they set forth justification by faith only, it was not by a faith without good works, which is dead and unprofitable. While they set forth salvation by grace only, they did not allow sin that grace might abound. In the whole compass of preaching, from the Apostles' day to the present, bolder rebukes of sin cannot be found. They spared nothing. Extravagance in dress, excess in eating as well

as drinking, and certain vices which, though now and always practised, and which now will scarce bear to be mentioned, except when read in the word of God, they publicly rebuked. They descended to particulars as to the things to be avoided and things to be done, and thus proved that they did not make void the law through faith; that the grace of God which they preached was that which taught that, denying ungodliness, and all worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world.

In this, my dear brethren of the ministry, for whom this appendix is chiefly designed, to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, though you knew these things before, let us also faithfully follow them; for our duty is to tell the people both the things they are to do and to forbear, as well as what they must believe and how they must feel.

In drawing to a close these extracts from the homilies, we must repeat our assertion, that these, together with our articles, are to be regarded as explanations of the language of the Church in her offices, being of later date than those expressions in the offices which have been the subject of dispute. Those expressions were retained, when the offices, coming down from more ancient times, were adapted to the reformed Church, on the principle of retaining whatever was rendered dear by long use, that was not evidently false, especially when the language was scriptural. The articles and homilies, taken as a whole, were certainly more modern as to their language, and, for that very reason, should be regarded as explanatory of the former; just as a comment is more modern than the text, and is explanatory of it. There are those who are disposed to elevate the offices above the articles and homilies, on account of the greater antiquity of some parts of them, and because they seem most to favor some of the high views lately advocated in the Church of England and America. The author, believing that the framers of all of them intended that they should speak the same sentiments, and that those expressed more entirely in their own language should define the meaning of the others, desires to make no difference between them, and to institute no invidious comparison.

Before dismissing this subject he cannot but refer to

an unauthorized attempt to weaken the force of some of the homilies, by a passage introduced into the American edition of them. Who the author of the passage was, he knows not. It is as follows: "In addition to the above, it should be recollected, that, in estimating the homilies, as evidence of the opinions of the Reformers, a difference should be regarded between the two books. The first of them was made a public document in the reign of Edward the Sixth. The other was prepared in the same reign, but not published until about four years after the accession of Elizabeth. That they were then reconsidered, and somewhat altered, is reasonable to be supposed; and indeed there is internal evidence of the fact." Now, the 35th article, both of the English and American Church, adopts them both, as containing a godly and wholesome doctrine, without intimating that there is a shadow of difference between them. The English Church caused them all to be used in the congregations throughout the kingdom. The American Church suspended the reading of them "until a revision of them may be conveniently made, for clearing of them as well from obsolete words and phrases as from the local references."

The author of the above unauthorized remark does not offer a word showing why it is reasonable to suppose that the second book of homilies was reconsidered and altered, or what is the internal evidence of the fact.

In reading over the homilies, with a view to the preparation of this treatise, the author of it was not unmindful of the above statement, and was careful to observe wherein the difference consisted. He could perceive no new doctrine, but only that in some of the latter the evils of the fall, and the necessity of repentance to all men, were more enlarged upon than in the brief discourses of the first volume. To some such language savors of what is called Calvinism.\*

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\* An effort is sometimes made to excite prejudice against the old evangelical portion of the English clergy and their successors, by representing them as Puritanical Calvinists. Truth ought to be stated on this subject. Amongst them, as amongst the Reformers, and probably in lesser numbers, there certainly were those who held the Calvinistic system. The broad platform laid down in our articles easily admitted



It becomes us, in these times, most watchfully and resolutely to hold fast to all the authorized expositions of the doctrines of the Reformation, for there are those who would cast some of them into an inferior position, and explain away others, so as to neutralize their effect. It cannot be disguised that a leaven of doubt and hesitation as to the full acceptance and observance of the doctrines and usages of the Church, as established at the Reformation, has been for some years spreading through England and America. It is not the apostacy of the few who have gone over to Rome, but the wavering and uncertainty of the many, which is most to be feared and most to be opposed. Amongst the latter are doubtless many pious persons, who should be treated with all tenderness, and reasoned with in a spirit of meekness. If the author has ever departed from this spirit, he asks forgiveness.

*Some other authorities.*

The importance of the subject will justify the addition to those adduced from the Scriptures and homilies, of a few other authorities of weight.

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them, and those differing from them on this subject. When the author was in England a few years since, it was his happiness to meet with the old and venerable Mr. Gisborn, one of the early leaders of the evangelical party, whose house was a place of rendezvous, not only for the clergy, but for such persons as Wilberforce, the Thorntons, Grants, and Hannah More. Speaking on this subject, he stated that, though there was a great diversity of sentiment in regard to it amongst them, there being Calvinists and Arminians of various grades, yet it never in the slightest degree interrupted their harmonious action and delightful intercourse. The old man was himself a decided Arminian, and presented me with a little volume of his own composition in defence of the system. The most prominent representatives of the Evangelical party among the laity were Wilberforce and Miss Hannah Moore; but whoever complained of either the Calvinism or Arminianism of their most admirable writings? The Christian Observer has now for more than fifty years represented the opinions of both the clergy and laity of that school; but whoever charged that moderate and excellent work with puritanical Calvinism? If we trace the school, as some prefer to do, but not with sufficient reason, to Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield, in their pious zeal while at Oxford, we find that these eminent men differed entirely on the Calvinistic points, and that Arminianism has, among their successors, prevailed greatly over its opposite.

One more only from the highest standards of our Church—our articles. There are those who, disgusted with some extravagant accounts of inward exercises, of bright manifestation, of rapturous hope in some of those who profess a conversion of soul unto God, or else from very inadequate views of man's state by nature and actual sin, are much disposed to reduce religion to the mere use of forms, a correct moral life, and an unconscious embracing of the Lord who bought us. To them we would present a description of the religion of the heart, in its rise and progress, from one of the articles of the Church, which we hope they will attentively consider. It is a passage in the seventeenth article, and that part of it about which there can be no difference of opinion as to its meaning. Speaking of our election in Christ, it says: "They which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose, by his Spirit working in due season; they, through grace, obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made the sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten son Jesus Christ; they walk, religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." Can any words more accurately describe the manner in which true piety begins, continues, and ends? The article also proceeds to speak of such persons as "they who *feel* in themselves the working of the spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things." Now of all this the subjects must be conscious. This is only another mode of expressing what takes place in the heart when, by the word and Spirit, true faith and repentance are wrought. Both of these are only varied modes of expressing what is contained in their baptismal vows, which are renewed in confirmation. To renounce the Devil and all his works—the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and to feel determined to serve God all our days. What is all this but true repentance and faith. Those who truly feel and believe, and resolve thus, are the persons described in the seventeenth article. In reply to any persons who ask, does the Church require conversion, or a new

heart, in order to confirmation and full communion; we may simply ask, can any but a truly converted person renounce the Devil and all his works, the world and all that is evil in it, and all sin in his members? Can any but a converted soul believe all that the apostles believed, and resolve to do all God's will? Our Church, instead of simply asking are they converted or not, adopts a more special and heart-searching method, and publicly demands whether they do feel and believe what is contained in those solemn questions—requiring parents and ministers faithfully to instruct the candidates in the true meaning thereof, and be satisfied of their sincerity and worthiness, before they present them to the bishop.

*King Edward's Primer.*

The following quotations are from a book containing lessons from scripture and prayers set forth by authority, in the reign of Edward Sixth, and designed for the use of families. In it there are prayers which clearly show, that they recognised no such regeneration in baptism as superseded the necessity of what we now understand by conversion or the new birth.

The following prayer for the Holy Ghost will plainly show this: "So frail is our nature, so vile is our flesh, so lewd is our heart, so corrupt are our affections, so wicked are all our thoughts, even from our childhood upwards, that of ourselves we can neither think, breathe, speak, or do any thing that is praiseworthy in thy sight, O Heavenly Father; yea, except thou dost assist us with thy merciful goodness, all things are so out of frame in us, that we see nothing present in ourselves, but thy heavy displeasure and eternal damnation. Vouchsafe, therefore, O sweet Father, to send thy Holy Spirit unto us, which may make us new creatures—put away from us all fleshly lusts—fill our hearts with new affections and spiritual motions, and so altogether renew us, both in body and soul, through his godly inspiration, that we may die unto old Adam, and live unto thee in newness of life, serving thee, our Lord God, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life." Amen.

The following is a prayer for the true knowledge of ourselves: "It is written in thy holy Gospel, most loving Savior, that thou camest into this world, not to call the righteous, *that is, such as justify* themselves, but sinners unto repentance. Suffer me not, therefore, O Lord, to be of the number of those justiciaries, which, boasting their own righteousness, their own works and merits, despise that righteousness which is by faith—which alone is allowable before thee. Give me grace to knowledge mine own self as I am, even the son of wrath by nature, a wretched sinner and an unprofitable servant, and wholly to depend on thy merciful goodness with a strong and unshaken faith, that in this world thou mayest continually call me to true repentance, seeing I continually sin; and, in the world to come, bring me to everlasting glory." Amen.

Another for faith: "Forasmuch as nothing pleaseth thee that is done without faith, appear it before the blind world never so beautiful and commendable, but is accounted in thy sight sinful and damnable, yea, the self sin and damnation; this is most humbly to desire thee, O Father, for Christ's sake, to breathe into my heart, by thy Holy Spirit, this most precious and singular gift of faith, which worketh by charity—whereby, also, we are justified and received into thy favor; that I, truly believing in thee, and fully persuaded of the truth of thy holy word, may be made thy son and inheritor of everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.

Now, let it be remembered, that these prayers were set forth to be used in families where all had been baptized in infancy; for, at that time, there was not even a service for the baptism of adults, nor for a considerable period afterwards, there being no occasion for it. Not a word in them supposes any thing like a moral regeneration in baptism, but the very contrary. The prayer for faith shows that nothing was recognised as acceptable to God, until that entered the heart, by the inspiration of the Spirit, and that it was the sole instrument of justification.



*The sentiments of some of the early reformers.*

From which it is evident, that even at that time the word regeneration was used in two senses, as it evidently was sometimes by the fathers: the one, the sense which we have supposed belongs to it in the baptismal service; the other, the renewing of the mind, when faith and repentance take place.

*Bishop Latimer's opinion.*

In one of his sermons, preached before Edward Sixth, wherein he sets forth the efficacy of preaching the word, he says: "Beware, beware you diminish not this office, for if you do, ye decay God's power to all who do believe. Christ saith, consonant to the same, 'except a man be born again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' 'He must have a regeneration,' and what is this regeneration? It is not to be christened in water, as these firebrands expound it, and nothing else. How is it to be expounded then? St. Peter showeth, that one part of scripture declareth another. It is the circumstance and collation of places that make scripture plain. Saith St. Peter, 'we be born again.' How? Not by a mortal seed, but by an immortal. What is this immortal seed? 'By the word of the living God'—by the word of God preached and explained. *Thus cometh our new birth.* Here you may see how necessary this office is to our salvation. This is the thing that the Devil wrestleth most against. It hath been all his study to decay this office. He worketh against it as much as he can. He hath prevailed too much, too much in it." "It were too long to declare unto you, what deceit and means the Devil hath found to decay the office of salvation—*this office of regeneration.*" Latimer's Sermons, p. 202, Parker edition.

*Bishop Coverdale.*

This is the fruit and the end which followeth out of the preaching of the word of God; that they whose hearts God toucheth are so sorry for their sins that it even pierceth them.

For God's word is even a sharp two-edged sword, and entereth through to the depth. Blessed are all they which so read and hear the word of God, that they begin to be ashamed of their sins and wickedness, being repentant and sorry therefor. A blessed and wholesome sorrow is that which riseth and groweth out of the truth—which is opened unto the heart by the Holy Ghost—which Spirit, in the heart, giveth hope upon the mercy of God, and driveth away all despair. Then beginneth a man to ask, what shall I do? Then inquireth he after the will of God; and such a man that so asketh is easy to be helped. Soon is he healed, that, knowing his disease, would fain be made whole." As to the sacraments, he says: "Here also we may learn how faithful believers use themselves in the outward sacraments. They that being moved by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in their hearts do hear the eternal word preached, giving credit unto it, and gladly receiving it, then do not afterward despise the outward sacraments, which God hath instituted for the welfare of his Church, but use the same with all obedience, good will, and reverence." "They know also that sacraments are evidences of the promise and grace of God, which they, after a visible and palpable manner, do set forth and represent unto us. These tokens of grace doth no man use more devoutly, and with more reverence, than he that in himself is certified and assured of the gracious favor of God; as we see in Cornelius, in Paul, and Queen Candace's chamberlain."

It is evident that, instead of making the grace of the sacraments go before the renewing of the mind by the Spirit, through the word, that he considers the sacraments as only rightly used after this. Though baptism be administered to infants, it is on the promise of faith and repentance, and it is not until they have those, that they use the baptism profitably.

### *Bishop Reynolds.*

Coming down to a later date, we find Bishop Reynolds using the word regenerate in the higher sense. "The unregenerate are of several rates and stamps. Some are apparently, and in the sight of men, outrageous sinners, upon

whom every man that sees them may, without breach of charity, pass this sentence—There goes a man who declares himself in the eyes of the world to be a servant of sin. Others there are of a more civil, composed course—men much wiser, but not a dram holier, than those before. In those men there appeareth not so sovereign and absolute a dominion of sin as hath been spoken of, inasmuch as they seem to live in a fair external conformity to the truths which they had learned. These more moderate sort of unregenerate men seem to shift off from themselves the charge of being subject to the reign of sin, inasmuch as they abhor many sins, and do many things which the rule requires.” The above is taken from Mr. Faber’s work on regeneration.

*Opinion of Bishop Hopkins, one of the Irish Bishops, in which regeneration is used in the same sense.*

Very difficult it is to persuade men against the prejudices of their corrupt hearts. This great change, they say, is more than need. Regeneration begins now to be decried by as great masters in Israel as ever Nicodemus was. Many understand not to what end the fabric of corrupt nature should be demolished, and men, as it were, turned out of themselves. They think if they are but baptized, whereby, as they suppose, the guilt of original sin is washed away, that a sober religious life, keeping from gross actual sins, is sufficient for the obtaining of Heaven, without those hard and inexplicable notions of regeneration. I shall therefore endeavor to convince you of the indispensable necessity that there is of being born again; that when you are persuaded of it, you may give no rest unto yourselves, nor unto God, till he cause his Spirit, which is that Spirit which bloweth where it listeth, to breathe spiritual life into you, without which it is impossible that you should inherit eternal life.”

“The seminal virtue, or means by which this new birth is effected, is the word of God. So you have it expressly in St. James: ‘Of his own will begot he us by the word of truth.’ The preaching of the word is the great means which God hath appointed for regeneration. Rom. x, 17.

‘Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.’ When God first created man, it is said he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. But when God now creates man, he breathes into his ears. This is that word that raiseth the dead, calleth them out of the grave, opens the eyes of the blind, turns the hearts of the disobedient and rebellious. Such an energy is there in the word of God, when the Spirit of God clothes it with power, that it breaks in upon the conscience, ruins and demolishes the power of sinful nature, and in an instant conveys spiritual light and warmth and quickening into the soul.”—Faber’s sermons on regeneration.

*Bishop Wilkins.*

This prelate advises us to pray earnestly to God “that he would give us a new heart, and put a new spirit within us, that thus we may be regenerate, and become new creatures, being born again of that incorruptible seed, the word of God.”—See the same.

*Dr. Isaac Barrow.*

We are naturally void of those good dispositions in understanding, will, and affections, which are needful to render us acceptable to God, fit to serve and please him, capable of any favor from him, and of any true happiness in ourselves. To remove which bad dispositions, and to beget those contrary to them, God in mercy doth grant to us the virtue of his Holy Spirit; who, first opening our hearts, begetteth divine knowledge, wisdom, and faith in our minds, which is the work of illumination and instruction. Then, by continual impressions, he bendeth our inclinations, and mollifieth our hearts, and tempereth our affections to a willing compliance with God’s will, and a hearty complacency in that which is good and pleasing unto God—which is the work of sanctification, another great part of his office. Both these operations together enlightening our minds, and sanctifying our wills and affections, do constitute and accomplish that work which is styled *the regeneration, renovation, vivification, new creation, resurrection* of a man—the faculties of our souls being so improved, that we become as



it were other men thereby, able and apt to do that for which before we were altogether indisposed and unfit."—The same.

Mr. Faber quotes many other writers, such as Tillotson, Horsely, Barrington, &c., showing that they understood and used the terms regenerate and unregenerate in the same sense as those quoted above.

*Sentiments of Bishop Moore, of Virginia, on the subject.*

Within the last few years, since this doctrine of baptismal regeneration has been brought into discussion, and different views of it have been set forth than those hitherto held, Bishop Moore has been quoted in their support. The author of this tract feels bound, in duty to his beloved predecessor in office, as well as to the cause of truth, to present this matter in its just light before the public, and especially before the Church in Virginia. It is true that there are expressions in one of his sermons, and in a letter, which give countenance to an higher view of the subject than that here affirmed to be the general sentiment of the Church, though not to the extravagances of the tractarian school.

Bishop Moore opened the general convention of 1820 with a sermon, in which he used some expressions which have been frequently adduced in behalf of the high view now taken by some. Being myself present at that convention, I say, without fear of contradiction, appealing to others for the accuracy of the statement, that they were generally disapproved of, not only by those who sympathized most with him in their general views of religion, but by those to whom he had ever been opposed. The latter said that he went beyond them in his doctrine of baptismal regeneration. A circumstance most decisive on this subject can be adduced if necessary. But, after all, nothing more can be made of his expressions than that a principle of grace was imparted in baptism, and that the Holy Spirit was connected with baptism. He does not affirm that actual moral change which supercedes any other, for in that very sermon he says, "when the Church, in her solemn service, speaks of baptismal regeneration, she does not deny the necessity of conversion in an adult sinner. Conversion forms a distinct principle, and

whoever violates the law of God must experience its transforming power, or perish in his sin; for, except we be converted, and become as little children, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And that he held that all men do violate the law of God, so as to need this conversion of heart, will soon be seen. We might appeal to all the clergy, and all the people of Virginia, to whom he preached for more than thirty years, whether he was ever heard to base his addresses to them on the ground of baptismal purity, which they had only to preserve, or, should they have lost it, seek to regain so far as they had lost it. We appeal to all those on whom he laid his hands in confirmation, and to those who witnessed this act, whether, in his affectionate and touching appeals to them, on such occasions, he ever reminded them of that supposed moral change, ever hinted at the thought of one of them not needing any thing different from what was bestowed on them in baptism. His appeal ever was to the vows then made, and the prayers and anxieties of the parents. But we do not mean to rely on the recollection of the whole diocess of Virginia. Seventeen of the sermons preached in Virginia are published with his memoirs, and let them speak and declare how he regarded the baptized. I am confident that the advocates for baptismal regeneration, as now set forth by some in our Church, will not call for aid from those sermons.

A few out of the many passages which might be adduced will suffice. In sermon 3d, page 374, he says "the conversion of a soul to God is its resurrection from death to life. It then begins to live, when it begins to live to God, to breathe after Heaven and holiness, to move towards the Almighty, and to make preparation for that eternity towards which we are rapidly hastening."

Sermon 9th, page 411. "It is thought by the world that to speak of the conviction of sin is an evidence of mental weakness, a principle unknown to any but to poor and illiterate." "Jehovah, remember, has but one mode of procedure with mankind. The law of repentance is equally binding upon all; the rich and the poor must, in this particular, meet together; for unless we repent we must all likewise perish."

Sermon 10th, page 426. "The terms of the covenant of grace consist in repentance towards God and faith in our

Lord Jesus Christ. The moment in which the penitent complies with those principles, that instant his request will be granted, and he will stand justified and acquitted before God. Study the sacred volume, and you will find the Savior was called the Savior of sinners. 'I come not, said he, to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.'

Sermon 12th, page 447. "When, by conversion of heart, he becomes a new creature, and is made an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ; when, from that change, he discovers in his life and conversation, he can say that his soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; when he becomes a partaker of that peace of God which passeth all understanding, what supreme cause has he for pious exultation."

Sermon 14th, pp. 468-'9. "When he discovers by the word of God that has drawn his likeness, 'that he is poor and miserable, and blind and naked;' when he finds that, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet there is no soundness in him, and that he is covered with wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores, he stands amazed. Can it be possible, he cries out, in an agony of grief, that my situation is so awfully alarming, and that I have remained so long insensible of it? 'Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.' He flies for refuge, perhaps, under his first alarms, to the law of God, and perceives that the law, to which he has flown for security, proclaims, in a voice louder than the seven thunders of Asia, the soul that sinneth it shall die."

I ask, do such passages as these accord with the preaching now recommended by the advocates of baptismal regeneration, as understood by them?

I feel it my duty to add, in relation to the views of Bishop Moore, that, when the doctrines of the Oxford school concerning baptismal justification were preached, he was the very first to sound the alarm and warn his clergy and people against them. And I will add, further, that when I read to him some of their statements about the change of nature effected in the infant, he emphatically said, that he held no such views; that he went no further than Bishop Hobart, whose sentiments have been already set forth.





